

CANADIAN
Bicentenary Papers.

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NONCONFORMITY IN ENGLAND IN 1662.
BY REV. W. F. CLARKE.

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THE REASONS FOR
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[NOTE.—The following Paper was prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union of Canada, held in Hamilton, in June, 1862. It is now published, after revision, by the request of many who heard it; the writer, of course, assuming the entire responsibility of its contents.]

OUR Ecclesiastical kindred in the father-land are busily engaged in reviving the history and freshening the memory of an event, which, though it occurred two centuries ago, is exerting a wondrous influence upon the times in which we live. That event, the ejection of some Two THOUSAND of the best of England's parish ministers from their pulpits and livings, under the operation of the Act of Uniformity, has obvious and strong claims to commemoration by the Congregational Churches of Great Britain. Founded, many of them, by the martyr spirits of that memorable era, located amid the very scenes rendered for ever sacred by association with Nonconformist heroism—themselves affected in various ways by the still unrepealed Act which wrought such injustice two hundred years ago—brought continually into juxtaposition and even rivalry with the Establishment; there is eminent propriety in their observing, with marked honour, the Bicentenary of English Nonconformity.

But what have Canadian Congregationalists to do with such a commemoration? Much every way. True we are not Dissenters, but Nonconformity is a distinct thing from Dissent. That term, as usually understood, implies objection to the Establishment principle, and it is a well-known fact that many of the worthies of 1662 did not stumble at *that*. With the question as to State Establishments of religion left wholly in abeyance, the matter of Conformity loses little or none of its interest and importance. The Episcopal denomination claims to be the church of Protestantism, in this as well as in the mother country. It displays all the ecclesiastical exclusiveness, makes all the sacerdotal pretensions, and maintains all the hierarchical proportions, which distinguish it in the father-land. Here, as there, it is the church of the Prayer Book. The worship and usages of Canadian Episcopalians are regulated by the provisions of the identical Act of Uniformity which produced martyrs on so large a scale in 1662. That Act bars all interchange of services between ministers of the Episcopalian and other bodies, prevents recognition of any but Episcopal ordination as valid, and is the occasion of alienation and strife from one end of the land to the other. From its prestige as "the Church of England in Canada," the ready transfer hither of all those associations which cluster round it in Britain, and the brand it places upon us as upstarts and schismatics, we may well feel called upon on all suitable occasions, and especially at such a time as this, to justify and defend our separate position. Surrounded, too, by many, who from our past and present feebleness in this country, are constantly ready to tell us that "we are of yesterday and know nothing," it is desirable to show that we have a history of which we have no reason to be ashamed—that however small and remote from the parent stem, we are nevertheless natural branches

of that genealogical tree which blossomed and fruited so gloriously 200 years ago, and though we call no man "Rabbi," vaunt no human names, and glory only in the Lord, it is our aim to stand where our nonconforming forefathers stood, in the "good old paths" of fidelity to conscience and submission to God only, in matters of religion. Lacking, as it must be confessed that we do, much of that *esprit de corps*, which characterizes other denominations, it may do something to kindle becoming enthusiasm in our own hearts, to see how the men of another age felt and acted under the influence of principles for which we are called to witness to-day. It may encourage us too, amid our trials and difficulties, to observe how, in the furrows plowed long and deep through a suffering land two hundred years ago, the seeds of truth were sown, from which a glorious harvest is now being reaped. Surely such considerations as these justify, nay *demand*, that we as well as our Fathers and Brethren in Great Britain, should recall the event of 1662, and bend our attention to the great lessons it so loudly teaches.

Fully to relate the circumstances which preceded and attended the ejection of the Nonconformists, would require more lengthened extracts from the page of English history than could possibly be crowded into this brief paper. A convenient starting point will be the last days of KING CHARLES, erroneously, shall we say superstitiously, styled "THE MARTYR." A series of persecuting acts, combined with the exercise of arbitrary power in civil affairs, exasperated the English nation, led to the overthrow of the Church as by law established, and brought the reign of the misguided monarch just mentioned to an abrupt and tragic close. The overturning of the Throne and Church took place because the state of society was volcanic, and those who might have warded off the catastrophe were infatuated

enough to hurry it on. A people ripe for larger freedom could not brook the imposition of new and unconstitutional restraints. Ecclesiastic and monarch were too proud and obstinate to bend at the bidding of reason and right, they despised conciliation and reform, and counted too confidently on their ability to crush and subdue the demand for civil and religious liberty. As Dr. Vaughan well observes, "That church would be a superstitious and intolerant church, and she paid the penalty; that king would be a tyrannical king, and would deal treacherously with his subjects to the last; and the natural consequences followed."

On the establishment of the Commonwealth, "that great Englishman, Oliver Cromwell," to whom history has at length done tardy justice, showed himself far in advance of the spirit of the age, in his views of the rights of conscience, and the nature of true religious freedom. It must be frankly confessed that the Puritans or Presbyterians, as they were henceforth called, were but too ready to copy recent prelatial examples. Having now the power, they showed, in many instances, the disposition to persecute. The Book of Common Prayer, not then so objectionable in some of its features as it is now, was suppressed. Its use was made a penal offence. A "Directory of Public Worship" was prescribed in its stead, and was required, under threat of pains and penalties, to be used "in *all* exercises of the public worship of God." The sequestration, about this time, of a large number of the clergy, was a high-handed act of authority which it is impossible wholly to justify. Still this ejection neither paralleled nor resembled that enforced in 1662 by the Act of Uniformity. It is important to have this clearly understood, because very extraordinary and unsupported statements are sometimes made in reference to the matter. Very few of the clergy

whom the Puritans ejected were sufferers for conscience sake. The great majority were set aside for absolute vice, utter incompetency, or for opposition to the existing government. Many of the clergy, from the active part they took in the national struggles then going on, suffered from the chances of war, and were plundered by the parliamentary soldiery, not because they were Conformists, but because they were Cavaliers. The Rev. D. Mountfield, who, being an Episcopalian clergyman, may well be regarded as good authority for such a statement, says in his valuable work recently published :* "Some of them probably were no loss to their parishes, being drunkards, swearers, ignorant as well as ungodly ; but others were good men, holy and learned, who had done no man wrong, a Hammond, a Jeremy Taylor, a Prideaux, a Hall, a Nicholas Ferrar ; these men were treated with remorseless bigotry, insulted, robbed, beggared, imprisoned—sixteen hundred in all, according to some—two thousand four hundred, according to others." It must also be borne in mind that these clergymen had no option in the matter—they did not, like the worthies of 1662, resign their livings to maintain a clear conscience—they went out of the church because they were not allowed to remain in it. On their ejection, too, some provision was made for their maintenance. They were allowed a fifth part of their livings, a lenient and considerate arrangement which you look for in vain in the case of the ejected Nonconformists. Moreover, many of those who were ejected by the Long Parliament for not taking the covenant, the only religious test imposed, were restored by Oliver Cromwell's "Triers." Many more would have been thus restored, if their characters and ministerial qua-

* TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO: An account of the Ejection of the Puritans from the Church of England, and the efforts made to restore them, with a sketch of their rise. 1862.

lifications would have stood examination. The whole case is a weighty argument against State Churchism, showing, as it does most conclusively, that the dominancy of one sect is sure to induce persecution of others. Furitanism itself, when allied with the civil power, became oppressive and exacting. Toleration and liberty of conscience were denounced as "damnable doctrines," and a spiritual tyranny as objectionable in principle, though not so cruel in spirit, as that of Laud, was established. The brief era of Puritan supremacy is an ample historical justification of the present race of Nonconformists, who not only refuse to subscribe to the declaration of assent and consent, but oppose, with united front and resolute determination, the union between Church and State in any and every form.

Anxious as Cromwell unquestionably was to prevent a second tyranny rising up in the place of the one which had been overthrown, he was unable wholly to repress the disposition to employ force in religious matters. He was sagacious enough to foresee the inevitable results of the alienation and strife which are naturally begotten by intolerance, and exerted himself to check and allay these tendencies. "When the parties which were then formed became angry, and sometimes vented their anger in hard words against each other, it was he who came in with words of caution and exhortations to forbearance, urging them to seek a settlement on the ground of what some men would call compromise, but which he, as an enlightened statesman, described as a settlement by mutual concession on the basis of mutual right and duty. He told them that if they would pursue that course, what they had gained at the cost of so much blood and treasure, would be preserved; but if they should pursue the contrary course, then, said he, 'you will be thrust to the wall. Charles Stuart will come back, and you will be all left to feed upon your little crotchets as

you best may, and very sorry provender you will find it, I warrant you!"* What was thus predicted, actually came to pass ere long. Very soon after the great Protector's death, the days of the Commonwealth were numbered. Weary of uncertainty, experiment, and apparently interminable contention, the nation hailed, almost with one heart and voice, the restoration of the monarchy in the person of the second Charles. The unanimity and enthusiasm displayed in connexion with this event, were largely owing to that memorable "Declaration from Breda," in which the politic monarch, eying wistfully the vacant throne of England, promised that he would grant "liberty to tender consciences," and pledged his royal word, that no man should be "disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion" in religious matters. The long distracted nation regarded this as the manifesto of an enlightened prince who had learnt excellent lessons in the school of adversity. All parties indulged the hope that with larger freedom, peace and concord would be established throughout the realm. But soon the old tendency to civil and religious tyranny which had once wrecked and ruined the fortunes of the Stuart dynasty, began again to betray itself. Hardly was the restored monarch fixed on his throne, when systematic measures were instituted in order to subdue independent and refractory thinking, and bind the whole nation with the chain of uniformity. Episcopacy was in the ascendant again, and true to its antecedents, determined to make no concession and extend no toleration to the "sectaries." Though the Puritan divines were invited to conferences, and some plausible overtures made for a basis of harmonious adjustment of differences, it soon became evident that the Episcopalian party was determined

* Dr. Vaughan's case of the Ejected Ministers of 1662.

to have everything its own way, and to get rid of all who placed any value on liberty of thought, freedom of conscience, and the right of private judgment. The Puritans or Presbyterians as they were interchangeably and indiscriminately called, were not disposed to be sticklish about minor matters. Had they been met in a spirit of generous and magnanimous consideration, an adjustment alike honourable to all concerned, might doubtless have been effected. But throughout the entire procedure, the bishops and their party displayed an exclusiveness and arrogance, such as quite precluded an harmonious issue. So obviously was this the case, that Episcopalian writers in speaking of the history of that period, employ language quite as strong as any Non-conformist could do. Archdeacon Hare says, "All hope of union was blasted by that second most disastrous, most tyrannical, and *schismatical* Act of Uniformity, *the authors of which it is plain, were not seeking unity but division.*" According to Bishop Burnet, "care was taken that nothing should be altered as it had been moved by the Presbyterians for *it was resolved to gratify them in nothing.*" The Puritans wished to make the Church of England comprehend all who held essentially the common faith of Christians. The aim of the bishops was to make this comprehension impossible,—at least it was resolved to exclude every puritan. "It is to be called a '*comprehensive*' church," said the Bishop of Ely with coarse and contemptuous ridicule, when preaching before the King,— "though I think it might better be called a *drag-net*,—or a *Trojan horse with a comprehensive belly!*" Isaac Taylor states, that the whole proceeding seems to have been conducted "with the express object of *preventing any extensive conformity taking place.*" The whole design of the conferences, so far as the Episcopalian leaders were concerned, appears to have been to ascertain how far the Puritans

were prepared to go in the way of concession, in order that by making extravagant demands in that direction, compliance might be rendered impossible. When the Earl of Manchester told the King in the presence of Sheldon, Bishop of London, "he was afraid the terms of conformity were so hard that many ministers would not comply,"—the Bishop replied, "he was afraid they would, but *now we know their minds*," he added, "WE WILL MAKE THEM ALL KNAVES IF THEY CONFORM." When after the act came into force, Dr. Allan said, "it is a pity the door is so strait," Sheldon replied, "No pity at all; if we had thought so many of them would have conformed, we would have made it straiter."

The Act of Uniformity required that every one who ministered in the Church should declare "his unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled, 'The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England; together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David, printed as they are to be sung in Churches: and the Form or Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.'" The Prayer Book to which "unfeigned assent and consent" was thus required, had just been subjected to a Revision, the prime object of which seems to have been to render it as distasteful and objectionable as possible to the Puritans. This is acknowledged by Episcopalians themselves. A distinguished Episcopalian writer, just quoted, Isaac Taylor, in his pamphlet on Liturgical Revision, says:—"In this unwise and unchristian spirit the Prayer Book was systematically revised—obnoxious ceremonies were not only retained, but were fortified by auxiliary rubrics; almost every incidental word or phrase in the Liturgy which the Puritans valued as

being favourable to their own ecclesiastical theories or their doctrinal views, was now carefully excised, and such words and such phrases were substituted as were known to be specially offensive to their prejudices. Those matters about which the Puritans scrupled were now made more prominent; and a coherence and systematic consistency were now given to those sacerdotal and sacramental theories which had previously existed in the Prayer Book only in an embryotic condition; and certain dogmas, which, by the moderation of the Reformers, had been couched in vague and general terms, were now expressed in ample and emphatic phraseology."

Again, he says, in reference to certain alterations, that they "seem to have been made *with no other assignable object than that of rendering the Prayer Book distasteful to the Puritans, and so preventing any probable or possible conformity.*" Mr. Taylor describes these alterations in detail, and a few samples may be given. "In spite of remonstrance, additional lessons were added from the Apocrypha, and the discretionary liberty previously possessed of changing such lessons for others, was taken away. In the words of Hallam, 'the Puritans having always objected to the number of saints' days, *the Bishops added a few more*—more than sixty of the mythical or semi-historical heroes of monkish legends,' and for the charitable purpose of annoying those who objected to all commemorations of the kind, *the names of a few Popes* were included in the list; because it was desired 'that parents might be allowed to present their own children at the font, and to dispense with the intervention of other sponsors, *to render that impossible*, a rubric was now first added to enjoin *three* god-parents for every child;' and the Puritans wishing the word 'priest' to be changed to 'minister,' the words 'pastor' and 'minister' *were changed into priest,* with

other offensive alterations that could not but have been designed."

"These changes," he adds, "trifling and indifferent as perhaps they seem at the present time, struck with a deadly malignity at the points which, to the Puritans, seemed vital points. The Puritans held that a bishop was only *primus inter pares*: that is the difference between bishops and presbyters was a difference of *degree*, not a difference of *order*—or, to use the words of Cranmer, that 'they were both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion.'

"In the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, the Church of England, by statute, as well as in practice, had recognised Presbyterian ordination. At the close of the sixteenth century, 'scores if not hundreds' of clergymen were officiating in the Church of England who had been ordained by presbyters in Scotland, or on the continent.

"Now, however, a clause was inserted in the preface to the Ordinal, asserting the necessity of Episcopalian ordination, and consequently denying the validity of the orders of all those who had been ordained during the last fifteen or twenty years.

"This liturgical change was not suffered to remain a dead letter. The Act of Uniformity *deprived of their ministerial character all those who had received Presbyterian ordination*, unless by consenting to Episcopal re-ordination, they would agree virtually to confess the nullity of their previous ministrations.

"But while the leaders of the High Church party were devising liturgical innovations, which they well knew would drive their antagonists out of the Church, at the same time, with an almost blasphemous irony, they inserted in the Litany a petition *for deliverance from that 'SCHISM' which THEY WERE THEMSELVES INTENTIONALLY BRINGING ABOUT by their own high-handed and intolerant conduct.*"

The celebrated John Locke, a most competent witness, has left on record some striking observations illustrative of the spirit in which the Act of Uniformity was framed and passed, and while he expresses his own view of the reason why many complied with the Act, he clearly shows that it was meant to exclude the most conscientious and devout. He says:—"Immediately after this, followed the 'Act of Uniformity.' This, the clergy, *i.e.*, the greater part, readily complied with; for you know that sort of men are taught rather to obey than understand, and to use that learning they have, to justify, not to examine. And yet that 'Bartholomew-day' was fatal to our church and religion, in throwing out a very great number of worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines, who could not come up to this and other things in the Act. And it is upon this occasion worthy your knowledge, that so great was the zeal in carrying on this church affair, and so blind was the obedience required, that if you compute the time of the passing of this Act, with the time allowed for the clergy to subscribe the Book of Common Prayer, thereby established, you shall find it could not be printed and distributed so as one man in forty could have seen the book they so perfectly assent and consent to. It is a fact that the Common Prayer Book, with the alterations and amendments made by the Convocation, did not come out of the press until a few days before the 24th of August, when those who could not comply with its requirements were ejected from their livings." *

In addition to the "unfeigned assent and consent" to "all and everything" in the Prayer Book, the Act of Uniformity required subscription to the three articles of the 36th Canon, wherein the King's supremacy in spiritual or

* Locke's Works, Vol. X.

ecclesiastical things is asserted, the faultlessness of the Prayer Book emphatically affirmed, and the 39 articles declared to be agreeable to the Word of God. "The prescribed and enforced form of subscription was singularly distinct, unequivocal, and solemn." "One order and form of words" must be used, *and no other*. "For the avoiding of all ambiguities," both the Christian and surname of the subscriber was to be set down, and he must declare, "I, N. N., *do willingly and ex animo subscribe to these three articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.*" No room was afforded for evasion, no opportunity given for mental reservation. Subscription could not be excused by the pressure of constraint. "Willingly and from the soul" must the act be done.

The issue thus presented was distinct and clear. Expressed in the briefest possible terms, the question that rung in many a good man's conscience was, "Will you lie for the sake of emolument and place?" It is true that much diversity of opinion prevailed among those who alike felt the impossibility, as honest and truthful men, of conformity. On a variety of points they were not agreed. To some, one class of difficulties, in the way of conformity, seemed less insuperable than they did to others. As Baxter says:—"The Nonconformists were of divers sorts, some being further distant from conformity than others." The grievous corruptions allowed in the Church, as reorganized under Charles II., seemed insurmountable obstacles to conformity in the case of those who had solemnly sworn to effect ecclesiastical reformation. Others were greatly exercised at the unjustifiable terms of communion imposed by the Act of Uniformity. Others could by no means reconcile Diocesan Episcopacy with the Word of God. Others regarded the oath of canonical obedience as pledging submission to a spiritual usurpation which cast

dishonour on the crown and dignity of Christ. Those who had received Presbyterian ordination could not, by submitting to re-ordination by bishops, declare that they had not in the past been ministers of Christ.

In reference, however, to the "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything in the Prayer-Book," the Nonconformists saw eye to eye. They were unanimous in objecting to the Apocryphal Lessons, they could not use a baptismal service which in the plain intent and meaning of the words, declared "all baptized infants to be regenerate by the Holy Ghost,"—the Confirmation Service staggered them,—they saw no Scriptural warrant for the administration of the Lord's Supper to persons notoriously unfit,—they could not make the authoritative and unconditional declaration of absolution to all sick persons who profess repentance,—nor could they read the sublime and touching burial service indiscriminately over all the dead. In these things they were agreed, and when it was demanded of them to give their "assent" and "consent" to what they firmly believed to be contrary to the Word of God, they nobly refused. To the question, "Will you lie for the sake of emolument and place?" a glorious army of two thousand gave forth an emphatic "No!" whose thunder-tones echoed and re-echoed throughout their island home, and whose reverberations, at the distance of two hundred years, are loud and distinct as ever. Conscientious, straightforward, God-fearing men as they were, they knew nothing of those modern arts of syllogistic jugglery, by which *some* conforming clergymen in the present day, contrive to convince themselves, that it is honest and right to subscribe to one creed and hold another. As the Rev. J. G. Rogers well remarks,* "They had not learned

* Lecture on "Puritans, Nonconformists, and Dissenters."

the ingenious subtleties of Mr. Wilson and other authors of 'Subscription made Easy,'—they had not cultivated the wondrous art by which words are made to assume such different senses at the will of the speaker,—they could not construe a positive declaration into a charitable hope,—in short, they were simple men who took the words as they found them, and discovering in them ideas which they held to be errors, they could not solemnly subscribe to them as truths." Their unsophisticated consciences received as unquestionable axioms, the propositions, that "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in a given book, can never be rightly professed if even a jot or a tittle be doubted," and that "HONEST MEN CANNOT USE FORMULARIES WHICH THEY THINK TO BE UNTRUE OR CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD." The singleness of heart and tenderness of conscience manifested by the Nonconformists of 1662, is rendered all the more conspicuous, impressive, and instructive by the contrast which is to be seen, not only in the case of the semi-sceptics officiating at Episcopal altars, but in that of the earnest, evangelical men who feel inward shrinkings and heart-misgivings in the discharge of those official duties which, in effect, express and renew, from time to time, "assent" and "consent" to what they regard as unscriptural. Inwardly sighing for some deliverance from a painful yoke, and fearing lest souls may be misled by the formularies which they can only pronounce with mental reservation, they must be, and doubtless are, the victims of many a pang from which a higher consistency and nobler courage would at once, and forever, deliver them. One is forcibly reminded, in the presence of such a contrast, of a question put by one of Nathaniel Heywood's parishioners, who, anxious to retain his beloved pastor, exclaimed, "Oh! sir, many a man now-a-days makes a *great gash* in his conscience—*cannot you make a little nick in yours?* That

"painful and successful preacher," as he is described to have been, left his much-loved charge because he could not make "*a nick*" in his conscience, and a noble spectacle that was of two thousand tender, un mutilated consciences, owning subjection to God alone. What a contrast to many a gashed and wounded conscience on which it is our misfortune and sorrow to gaze in certain quarters to-day!

These faithful men had contemporaries who soothed inward uneasiness, and overcame conscientious repugnance by the help of evasion and subterfuge. Some got over the difficulty of re-ordination by the help of an ingenious theory, that it was but a renewal of what had been already effected, and was *accumulative* in its character and influence. With reference to the Prayer Book, though objection was felt, it was resolved not to "*philosophize* upon the words," but to accept the requirements of the Act as simply implying approval of the *use* of the Common Prayer, a view which, when attempted to be embodied in a Relief Bill the year following, was declared by Parliament to have "neither law nor justice in it." The blessedness of union, the importance of reducing the ecclesiastical confusions of the times, the folly of sacrificing great influence and usefulness for the sake of small scruples, these and like considerations weighed with not a few. "One M. Frank, S. T. P., asked, with impassioned earnestness, were their talents, their offices, and their powers of doing good at their own disposal? Were the cries of their people, and their families hanging on them, easily answered? Was the importunity of friends, the persuasions of foreign divines, and the authority of ancient custom, to go for nothing? *Only small matters were in the way*, and he that died of the bite of a weasel, lamented that it was not a lion."* But there were two thousand

* See Stoughton's Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago, pp. 287-8.

who could not resort to subterfuge and evasion. The Act was pressed upon them in the "*strict grammatical meaning*." It did not seem to them that questions of truth, honesty, sincerity, faith, *were* "small matters." Than these, they knew of no larger interests anywhere in the domain of moral obligation, as defined by that only rule of human belief and action—the *Word of God*.

The conduct of these noble men, the principles on which they acted, and the spirit they manifested, all through the trying ordeal to which they were subjected, show clearly that they were not influenced by caprice, or by the morbid sensitiveness of weak, tender, but unenlightened consciences, but that a high sense of duty reigned supreme, and their guiding star was the apostolic maxim, "we ought to obey God rather than men." Imperative indeed must that sense of duty have been, which led a Calamy, the most popular of London ministers,—a Baxter, to whom a bishopric had been offered,—a Howe, with his clear judgment and elevated piety,—a Henry, who so loved his work that the Sabbath often seemed to him heaven itself, and who had a concern to be among the "quiet of the land," that he might prosecute his beloved work unmolested,—and such kindred spirits as Owen, and Charnock, and Manton, and Bates, and Flavel, with others, forming a galaxy of gifted and saintly men such as no single age, before or since, has produced—imperative indeed must that sense of duty have been which compelled them simultaneously to vacate their pulpits, sacrifice their daily bread, and go forth into a cold world, not knowing whither they went. John Howe, in a conversation with Bishop Wilkins, remarked, "that one thing he could tell him, with assurance, that that latitude of his to which the Bishop had been referring (meaning his catholicity of spirit, and liberality of principle and feeling) was so far from inducing him to conformity, that it was the very thing

which made him and kept him a Nonconformist. He could not recognise in the present constitution those noble and generous principles of communion which he thought must, sooner or later, characterise every Church of Christ; that, consequently, when that flourishing state of religion should arrive, which he thought he had sufficient warrant from the Word of God to expect, a constitution which rested on such an exclusive basis must fall; that believing this to be the case, *he was no more willing to exercise his ministry under such a system than he would be to dwell in a house with an insecure foundation.*"

"Pray, sir," said another bishop to Howe, "what hurt is there in being twice ordained?" "Hurt, my lord," rejoined Howe; "it hurts my understanding; the thought is shocking; it is an absurdity, since nothing can have two beginnings. I am sure I am a minister of Christ, and am ready to debate that matter with you, if your lordship pleases, but I cannot begin again to be a minister."

Another of the ejected, John Oldfield of Derbyshire, in a soliloquy found among his papers after his decease, says, "It is not, oh my soul! a light matter thou art now employed in; it is not thy maintenance, family, wife, or children, that are the main things considerable in this enquiry. Forget these till thou art come to a resolution in the *main* business. It is, oh my soul, the glory of God, the credit and advantage of religion, the good of that poor flock committed to thy keeping by the Holy Ghost,—thy ministry, thy conscience, thy salvation, and the salvation of others, that must cast the scale and determine thy resolution. And where all cannot be at once promoted (or at least seem to cross one another), it is fit the less should give place to the greater. Thy ministry, thy people must be singularly dear and precious to thee; incomparably above body, food, raiment, wife, children, and life itself; but when thou canst

no longer continue in thy work without dishonour to God, wounding conscience, spoiling thy peace, and hazarding the loss of thy salvation,—in a word, when the conditions on which thou must continue, (if thou wilt continue), in thy employment are sinful, and unwarranted by the Word of God, thou mayest, yea thou must, believe that God will turn thy very silence, suspension, deprivation, and laying aside, to his glory and the gospel interest.”

Another ejected minister writes: “A noble lord enquired ‘whether I would conform or not.’ I answered, ‘such things were enjoined as I could not swallow, and therefore should be necessitated to sound a retreat.’ His lordship seemed much concerned for me; but seeing me unmoved, he said with a sigh, ‘I wish it had been otherwise; but they were resolved either to reproach you or undo you.’” Another great peer, when speaking to him of the hard terms of conformity, replied, “I confess I could scarcely do so much for the Bible as they require for the Common Prayer Book.”

“My God,” exclaims one of these spiritual heroes as he writhes amid the anguish of his inward struggle, “My God! may I declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all things in this book of Common Prayer, and to the use of those unprofitable, but most offensive ceremonies, which have occasioned so much mischief already in the church, and turned so many out of the way? to the constant practice of this Common Prayer as it now is? to this consecration of bishops, and to many things in the ordaining priests and deacons? to the reading of those vain stories in the Apocrypha, while so much of thy word, inspired by thy Spirit, is left out? to those things in the Catechism which intimate Baptismal Regeneration? May I now renounce the solemn oath, the covenant, wherein the nations stand bound to a reformation?” &c. “My Lord,” he adds, “I am at thy

footstool; I may not do evil that good may come, I may not do this great sin against my God, and the dictates of my conscience. I therefore surrender myself, my soul, my ministry, my people, my place, my wife and children, and whatsoever else is herein concerned, into thy hand from whom I received them. Lord have mercy upon me, and assist me for ever to "keep faith and a *good conscience!*" The prayer was heard, and years after on the bed of death, in reviewing his decision, the good man exclaimed with devout thankfulness, "I bless God with all my soul I did not conform."

Edward Bury, a worthy minister at Great Bolas, in Shropshire, thus records his deliberate judgment as to duty in the matter:—"I solemnly profess, in the presence of the Great God, before whom I must shortly give an account of my words and actions, that in my most impartial judgment, after all the light I can get by reading, praying, thinking, and discoursing with about twenty judicious and solid divines, of both persuasions, I look upon it as my duty not to conform; and whatever becomes either of myself or my family, as I cannot force my judgment, so I will not dare to force my conscience." "Before the Act of Uniformity came forth," writes Mrs. Alleine, wife of the saintly author of "*Alleine's Alarm*," "my husband was very earnest, day and night, with God, that his way might be made plain to him, and that he might not desist from such advantages of saving souls, with any scruple upon his spirit. He seemed so moderate, that both myself and others thought he would have conformed; he often saying that he would not leave his work for small and dubious matters; but when he saw those clauses of *assent* and *consent*, and renouncing the Covenant, he was fully satisfied."

Lawrence, of Baschurch, near Shrewsbury, observed, "that if he would have consulted with flesh and blood, he

had eleven good arguments for conformity, for he had a wife and ten children dependent on him for support." "Brethren," exclaimed Mr. Lye, another of their number, "I would do very much for the love I bear to you; but *I dare not sin*. I know they will tell you this is pride and peevishness in us—that we are tender of our reputation, and would fain all be bishops, and forty things more; but the Lord be witness between them and us in this. Beloved, I prefer my wife and children before a blast of air or people's talk. I am very sensible of what it is to be reduced to a morsel of bread. Let the God of Heaven and earth do what he will with me, if I could have subscribed with a good conscience, I would. I would do anything to keep myself in the work of God; but to SIN AGAINST GOD, I DARE NOT."

Volumes might be filled with extracts, facts, and anecdotes, illustrative of the principles on which this noble army of martyrs acted. But the samples now given must suffice. Next to the story of what they *did*, naturally comes the account of what they *suffered*. As if to be equal in disgrace and infamy to that Romish Church from which it was but partially reformed, and to give Protestantism, as well as Popery, a "*Black Bartholomew*," the day designated in the Calendar of the Church the "Feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24th, was chosen as the date of ejectment by the rampant Episcopacy of 1662. The time was fixed at such a part of the year that, if they did not conform, they would lose all the profits of their livings for that year, which was drawing towards its close. The day came, and two thousand noble confessors, with their wives and children, were houseless, homeless, penniless. This was but the beginning of sorrows. Their history henceforth was one of peril and straits. "Some died broken-hearted, some left the country, some became physicians,

others famous once became private tutors, and were heard of in the world no more. Many, with their families, had to exchange a life of refinement and competency for a life on the verge of starvation, gentlemen and scholars as they were. Many had to adopt the calling of farm servants or artisans. Some were too old to support themselves by such new modes of labour. Privation, grief, and want soon released these from earthly trouble.* Many a heart that would not have faltered at the stake, shrunk from the slow fires with which the furnace glowed. "Martyrdom," says Rogers, "might have been borne, nay, in many instances, would have been most welcome; but long years of penury and destitution, with the maddening spectacle of a starving family, these must have been worse than many martyrdoms."

Successive measures, of a persecuting character, added fuel to the flame kindled by the Act of Uniformity. "The Conventicle Act, forbidding all meetings for religious worship contrary to the order of the Church of England, when there should be five persons present, besides the members of the family above 16 years of age and imposing fines and imprisonment, soon crowded the jails of the kingdom, and "among the sufferers," says Macaulay, "were some of whose genius and virtue any Christian society might well be proud." Then came the Five Mile Act, forbidding any of the ejected clergy from coming within five miles of the places where they had been "parson, priest or vicar," under pain of imprisonment and a fine of forty pounds for each offence. A second and still more rigorous Conventicle Act, together with the Test Act, which required the Lord's Supper to be taken, after the manner of the Church of England, by all persons who should be placed in any office or trust, civil or military, completed the machinery by which the endeavour

* Stanford's *Life of Joseph Alleine*, pp. 178-9.

was made to root out the spirit of Nonconformity. But all was vain.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers."

The spirit of Nonconformity grew strong amid suffering; persecution proved itself, as ever, a signal failure, and relaxation of severe measures came at length, but too late for any practical benefit to the persecuting party. The odious Act of Uniformity, of which the other measures were but the fit appendages, remained, *as it still does*, UNREPEALED, and, as Dr. Vaughan well observes, its effect has never been to cure men of tendencies to Nonconformity. Under its working, disaffection toward the Church of England has gone down deeper into the English heart, and the result we see in the fact that, at this day, half the people of England are outside the pale of the Establishment. Yet the Act still stands unchanged. "To change it in any essential respect," says Stanford,* "would be to shake the very foundations of Anglican Episcopacy, for it is the political rock on which the Church is built." Strange as it may seem in reference to this vestige of a persecuting age, the Act has its defenders; nay, there are modern apologists for it, who unhesitatingly justify the way it was originally carried out. Though a deplorable failure, not only in its effect on the nation at large, but in its influence on the Episcopalian Church itself, there it stands, grim and unrelenting as ever. The spectacle now presented by the Church of England is indeed a sad, though instructive one. Every phase of belief and of unbelief is comprehended within her pale. She is a house divided against itself. Both Shibboleth and Sibboleth are pronounced by her children, together with many a dialect not comprehended in the language of

* *Life of Alleine*, p. 181.

Canaan. Three great sections especially stand forth prominent: the Evangelicals, who dissent from the theology of the Liturgy; the Tractarians, who dissent from the theology of the Articles; and the Essayists, who dissent from the theology of both Liturgy and Articles. A large party is clamorous for liturgical revision. Not long ago, *five hundred clergymen* petitioned for a reformed Liturgy. The discussion of this demand is bringing out strange phases of thought and workings of conscience. In reference to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, generally referred to by the ejected ministers of 1662 as a principal reason for non-subscription, and felt to be one of the most objectionable features in the theology of the Liturgy by the Nonconformists of the present day, some extraordinary admissions and assertions are being made by the advocates and opponents of revision. One of the former,* speaking of himself and his brethren, who reject the literal meaning of the Baptismal service, frankly declares:—"We say one thing, and mean another, at the risk of being continually misunderstood. . . . The positive and absolute meaning of the words, as they stand, is altogether banished, and supplanted by another of hypothesis and hope. The words are not to mean *what at first they did mean*, and *naturally ever will mean*: they may say one thing, but they *must* mean another. And instead of "this child is regenerate," our thoughts are to be '*we hope* this child is regenerate!' To our shame and sorrow be it spoken, that we have solemnly subscribed to the Prayer Book, as containing in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, at the very time that conscience obliges us to reject the natural sense as unscriptural, and to invent another; and that we have declared that we will use the form in the said book pre-

* Rev. Philip Gell, "Thoughts on the Liturgy."

scribed, and no other, when, fictitiously and covertly, we are using another all the while and rejecting this. . . . TO PROCEED IN THIS WAY OF DUPLICITY BEFORE GOD MUST BE WRONG IN A VERY HIGH DEGREE, WHATEVER EXCUSES MAY BE MADE FOR IT." On the other hand, we find the present Bishop of Exeter boldly proclaiming: "If infants be not born again of the Spirit of God IN BAPTISM, the Church which affirms that they are, not only teaches superstition of the grossest kind, but also *teaches a lie both to, and of, the Holy Ghost*. But if baptized infants be so born again, those ministers who teach the contrary, *not only are false to their most solemn vows*, but teach, as God's Word, *what is manifestly sacrilegious and blasphemous*." "It is *perfectly incomprehensible* to me," says the Bishop of Tasmania in a recent charge, "how the denier of Baptismal Regeneration *can make up his mind to use the services in which THE FACT is so positively insisted upon*. He must, as it seems to me, speak with *doubting lips, and a misgiving heart*. He must surely use the Church's words, not in that literal and grammatical meaning which she so evidently enjoins, but rather in *that non-natural sense*, through the application of which an attempt was made, some years ago, so to explain away the Articles as to render it possible for a man to hold any doctrine of Rome, and yet to subscribe to them. The principles of Tract 90 (for it is to that which I allude) are, in my judgment, so ESSENTIALLY DISHONEST, that I have no mind to *wink at the adoption of their system of interpretation in this diocese*, whether they lead or lean to Rome or Geneva." One English rector affirms that the declaration of assent and consent requires such a latitude in a solemn act as no honest man would allow himself to use for any other contract, however trifling. Another entreats the clergy to be no longer treacherous to truth, but to come forward boldly and nobly and obtain relief to their con-

sciences, by petitioning Parliament to change the terms of conformity; while a third, like the prelates quoted a little ago, satisfied with things as they are, kindly informs his scrupulous brethren that they can relieve their distressed consciences by resigning their livings; but as most well-to-do people wish to make as little change as possible, he recommends them to obtain an alteration of only *two letters* in the Act of Uniformity, so that instead of declaring their *unfeigned* assent and consent, they might be permitted to declare their *feigned* assent and consent.

Facts and utterances such as these vindicate the conduct and do honour to the memory of the Nonconformists of 1662. It were a still nobler vindication of the "good confession" borne two hundred years ago, and a glorious homage and sacrifice to the truth, would all those who share the views of the two thousand confessors of 1662, manfully walk in their footsteps. As the Rev. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, forcibly remarks,* "there are clergymen in our own time ministering at the altar of the English Church who object, as the two thousand did, to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, to language used in the Confirmation service, to absolution in the service for the Visitation of the Sick, to the Burial service. It belongs to them, rather than others, to do honour to the heroic fidelity and conscience of the men of 1662. . . . The truest, fittest, sublimest celebration of the Bicentenary, would be for the eight or ten thousand of the Evangelical clergy who object to these services in the Prayer Book, but who obtain their ministerial office and their ministerial income by avowing their "unfeigned assent and consent" to all the book contains, to come out and declare to the English people that they can no longer retain a position which they

* Lecture in reply to the Rev. Canon Miller.

acquired by professing to believe what now, at least, they reject."

At present, however, there is no sign of such a movement. But there is manifest uneasiness and disquiet, together with a morbid sensitiveness, which clearly show the activity of the inward monitor in many a troubled bosom. Meantime, those who occupy substantially the same ground of conscientious nonconformity, as was taken by the worthies of 1662, are reviving the noble deeds, and paying respect to the memories of their illustrious spiritual ancestors. By lectures, publications, and a princely fund, to be expended in disseminating the principles for which the Nonconformists stood so bravely, and suffered so heroically, suitable commemoration is being made of this Bicentenary year. If, in connection with all this, contrasts are drawn, and opinions expressed that bear upon contemporaries, there is surely no cause for fault-finding, provided the spirit of love be cherished and exhibited. It is no new thing in the earth for good men to be accused of enmity for "speaking the truth in love." Many lose sight of the fact that it is the duty of Christians, enforced alike by Scripture precept and example, to watch over their brethren in the Lord—to exhort them as opportunity offers—to reprove them when occasion requires, and to withstand them to the face, if, like Peter and Barnabas at Antioch, they are carried away by any dissimulation. Nor can it be wrong, while eulogising the spiritual heroes of a bygone age, to hold up their conduct for imitation in the present day. The men of 1662 taught the world a noble lesson, and set the Church a glorious example. To preserve "a conscience void of offence toward God and man," they were willing to suffer the loss of all things. When single-hearted allegiance to Christ required, they courageously said one to another, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

Most meekly did they bear that reproach, most patiently did they endure even unto the end. Nor can we put up for ourselves or our brethren a more appropriate prayer than that we may be enabled to stand for the truth with constancy such as theirs—to maintain like them, at all cost, “a good conscience”—to *do* as they *did*, and, if need be, to *suffer* as they *suffered*.

“Their steps may we pursue,
As they obeyed their Lord.”

We shall best honour their memories by imitating their example. In an age which presents many a sad spectacle of humiliating bondage, let us dare to be really free. In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, let us have the holy boldness to be upright and true. Exposed to the contempt of many who sneer at downright conscientiousness as needless and over-scrupulous particularity, let us beware of yielding to a temporizing policy. Discarding the principle of expediency, let us show a manly faith in the expediency of principle. These things will require no little moral courage. Christian freemen, truly such, are few in number. The multitude loves the broad road of ease-seeking selfishness, and shuns the narrow, rugged pathway up which the soldier of Christ must clamber to conflict and victory. Be it ours to care less for the outward than the inward, more for the spirit than the form. With Robert Hall, let us feel that “there is nothing better for a mind than to rest in Providence, to move in charity, and to *turn itself on the poles of truth*.” Like John Milton, let us prize, above all liberties, “the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to the dictates of conscience.” Thanks to the valiant fighters and heroic sufferers of the past, we *have* this liberty as our heritage. Let no mess of pottage tempt us to sell our birthright. Let no yoke of

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bondage entangle us, no chain of slavery fetter us. Let us never forget, to quote the words of a gifted poet :—

“They are slaves who would not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think.
They are slaves who fear to be
In the right with two or three.”

We are not only greatly indebted to our Nonconforming forefathers for the example they have left us, and for the work which, under God, they achieved in the direction of civil and religious liberty, but let us bear in mind that we owe them a still larger debt of gratitude for what they did toward perpetuating a sound theology, and promoting vital religion as distinguished from ritualism and formalism. The writings of Howe, Owen, Baxter, Manton, Charnock, Bates, and others, are distinguished by a fulness and richness of holy thought, an evangelical savour, a point and practical power, an experimental acquaintance with the deep things of God, such as have been rarely equalled, and never surpassed. Despite their quaintness, prolixity, the number of their divisions, and their antiquated method, they are invaluable treasures to the ministry and church of our own time. It has been well observed :—“Their writings have erected to their memory a monument more durable than brass or marble, which has so perpetuated and diffused their sentiments and spirit, that had their enemies anticipated the consequence of excluding them from the pulpits, they would have left them to preach, that they might have had no leisure to write.”*

The influence of the Nonconformists on their own and on succeeding ages, will never be fully known until the great

* “History of Dissenters,” by Bogue and Bennet.

revealing day. Their course of action was a most useful demonstration, in a loose, licentious age, of the power of religious principle, while their spirit, works and prayers have been of inestimable benefit to British Dissenters, to the thousands of churches in America, and even to the English Establishment itself. "I am glad," said one who lived in their day, and who was not a Nonconformist, "I am glad so many have chosen suffering rather than conformity to the Establishment, for had they complied, the world would have thought that there had been nothing in religion; but now they see that there are some sincere in their professions." The wondrous revivals of religion in the next century may largely be attributed to the Divine blessing on their labours and testimony, and it would be easy to trace at length the effect of their learning, piety, self-sacrifice, and prayers on our own age. Blessed men of God! may your mantle rest on the shoulders of those who enjoy your precious legacy of freedom and truth; may a double portion of your spirit be theirs; and may they ever draw the inspiration of their faith and zeal from a fellowship such as yours, which was "TRULY WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST!"



Canadian Bicentenary Papers.

No. II.

THE REASONS FOR NONCONFORMITY IN CANADA IN 1862.

BY THE REV. F. H. MARLING.

[NOTE.—The following Paper was prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union of Canada, held in Hamilton, in June, 1862. It is now published, after revision, by the request of many who heard it; the writer, of course, assuming the entire responsibility for its contents.]

It has been deemed advisable that, in connection with our present commemoration of the Nonconformists of 1662, there should be not only a setting forth of their sufferings for conscience' sake, but also a review of our own position two centuries later, and on this new soil, in reference to the same question which then claimed an answer from them—“Will you conform to the Church of the Prayer Book?”

This question comes to us in a very different shape from that in which it was presented to our Fathers,—for such, notwithstanding all denials of our kindred, we feel we have a right to call them; and we approach its consideration with other prepossessions and associations than they brought to it. A demand of Conformity is not made upon us by authority of all the estates of the Realm, on behalf of a so-called National Church, for, thank God! no one religious body is here so exalted above the rest. We owe it in a large

measure to the Ejected of 1662, though they knew it not, that a conviction of the inevitable and incurable evils of an Ecclesiastical Establishment was so early and so deeply wrought into the minds of the Canadian people, that, though steps were taken at the very beginning of our history, and most persistently followed up, to endow the Anglican Church and invest it with all the power and prestige of the Religion of the Colony,—these plans were frustrated, and but a few fragments of the overshadowing structure that was to have been, remain scattered over the ground in the shape of Rectories, Commutation Funds, and so forth, to remind us of the destiny which some had promised to the infant State. We claim with others to have done the State an inestimable service by relieving it of all Church patronage and control; and our consciences are very void of offence towards the church which clung so convulsively to its endowments, and so vehemently denounced its “spoilers,” for now that it is so nearly self-dependent, it is free and self-reliant, and in its new voluntary endowments of Parishes and Sees, its elective Episcopate, its Diocesan and Provincial Synods evincing so much of regulated life and power, and its casting itself—with ever less and less of surprise and timidity—upon the activity and liberality of its own members,—we see the fulfilment of every prophecy which we had uttered, and the contradiction of every lugubrious foreboding of our former opponents. Standing thus upon an equal footing, as far as the laws of the Colony are concerned, with the churches which are endowed in Britain, *we are not* “*Dissenters*,” nor should we ever assume or accept such a name. The term “Nonconformity,” in the title of this paper, is not used strictly, since there is among us no Establishment to conform to: only by way of accommodation, for the sake of conciseness, and to indicate our historical connection, is it here employed.

Notwithstanding, however, the absence of an endowed and dominant church, though we are not—like the two thousand—the possessors of “livings” which we must lose unless we accept the Prayer Book,—little cause as we have to fear a Conventicle Act forbidding our assembling of ourselves together, or a Five Mile Act to keep us at that distance from any corporate town,—it is no idle or irrelevant question for us to reconsider, could *we* do what the ejected refused to do? We may not be insensible of some losses entailed upon us by standing aloof from what—though not *the* church—is *a* church of no mean position in our land, numbering its adherents by hundreds of thousands, embracing a large proportion of the most influential classes in society, and comparatively free in practice, even if somewhat against its will, from that political character, and that enjoyment of exclusive privileges, which a command of the “secular arm” has given it in the Father-land. The choice that we make of a communion in which to worship and especially to minister, ought not to be decided—though it cannot but be influenced—by hereditary beliefs. We should be able to “give a reason” why we belong to this body, and why we do not belong to that.

An enquiry of this kind, in reference to the Church of England, is especially appropriate on this occasion, seems, indeed, to be demanded by it, for two reasons: 1. The Act of Uniformity is still in full force, and is carried into effect at every Episcopal ordination. 2. “The Church in this Province” is, according to the well-weighed “Declaration” of principles put forth by the Provincial Synod, at its first meeting, held at Montreal, in September, 1861, “an integral portion of the United Church of England and Ireland.” The penalties of nonconformity in Canada may be very different, but the *requirements of ordination* are the same. The lapse of years, the progress of religious liberty, and

our position in a new country, have materially modified some accidents (logically speaking) of the question; but its essence remains unchanged. For the same reasons, we may find objections to what is involved in Anglican "orders" which our fathers did not, and *vice versâ*. From the point of view of Canada and of 1862, therefore, we shall survey our subject. And as the event we commemorate was an example of "Conscientious Clerical Nonconformity,"—the Act of Uniformity dealing only with the clergy,—let us consider the question in this shape:—

What would present itself as necessary to be professed and done by one of our own ministers, who had been by some means led to contemplate receiving ordination from an Anglican Bishop, and was seeking to ascertain whether he could do so with a good conscience?

The first thing that meets our enquirer is, that *until he has received Episcopal ordination, the Church of England will not recognise him as a minister of Christ*. Not only in the English *Establishment* does the law of the land forbid him to occupy the buildings set apart by the State for the Episcopal Church, but he finds the same exclusion practised in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, which has no connection with the "powers that be." In the British Colonies, he is told, at the best,—as the Bishop of Adelaide wrote to the Rev. Thomas Binney during the latter's Australian tour, and while discussing in an excellent spirit the terms of a possible union of evangelical christians,—“Neither the power of your intellect, nor vigour of your reasoning, nor mighty eloquence, nor purity of life, nor suavity of manners, nor soundness in the faith, would justify me in departing from the rule of the Church of England; a tradition of eighteen centuries which declares *your orders irregular*, your mission the offspring of division, and your church system—I will not say schism—but

dichostasy." [Note to "dichostasy"—"Gal. 5: 20, 'seditions,' literally, 'standing apart.']* Again, "If I have doubts how far the letter of the Ecclesiastical Statute Law of the Established Church of England is applicable to this or other colonial dioceses, I have none as respects its spirit, nor of the *inspired authority* of the apostolic 'tradition of eighteen centuries' on which that law is founded. . . . I could not, therefore, nor can I feel justified in departing from that traditionary rule, even in your case."† On this ground, as well as on that of possible illegality and want of precedent, this liberal prelate felt compelled to refuse assent to a memorial, signed by the Governor of the Colony and a large number of other members of the Church of England, praying that Mr. Binney might be allowed to preach in one of the Episcopal pulpits. With no such scruples or misgivings the Bishop of Toronto declares, "In all the British Colonies, we are alone entitled, as holding the divine commission, and as the clergy of the National Church, to be their teachers, guides, and directors in spiritual things."‡ Who-soever, therefore, "takes orders" from the hands of an Anglican prelate, must virtually confess that until then he has been no true minister of Christ at all, but a simple layman, touching with unhallowed hands the Ark of God, and treading with unanointed feet the Holy of Holies. A thousand times worse, he must cut himself off from ministerial fellowship with all who have not been Episcopally ordained. A Binney, a Chalmers, or a Robert Hall, he dare not ask to preach or pray in his pulpit or desk! He *must, officially*, deem their "orders irregular," and go out of "his own place" to some neutral territory—neither church nor conventicle, perhaps then with abject apologies,—before he can treat as a brother minister such a man as the

* Binney's "Church-Life in Australia," p. 6. † *Ib.*, App, p. 6. ‡ Charge, 1844.

Bishop of Adelaide describes Mr. Binney to be! On the other hand, he *can*, and he *MUST*, acknowledge as brethren in the service of the Gospel, "*duly called*" to minister the Word and Sacraments, with "orders" most "regular" and unquestionable, many a man whom he believes to be unconverted to God, and whom he believes to be preaching deadly error—to-day a Rationalist, to-morrow a semi-Romanist! Moreover, if a Romish priest desires to conform to the Church of England, *he*, unlike the minister of any Protestant Church, *needs no re-ordination*! A bishop has laid hands upon him and he is a consecrated man! To be obliged to turn your back on all other christian ministers, as ministers,—on such grounds, and in such company,—does it not "give you pause?"

Supposing however, that, for the sake of the advantages of "orders," all this can be endured, the next fact to be encountered is, that these *orders must be conferred by a Bishop*. His "Chaplains" examine all candidates, and with him it rests to say whether each one shall be admitted or rejected. It is true that other Presbyters join in the imposition of hands, but in the approval of the candidate they have no voice. To the Bishop, also, a promise is made of canonical obedience. Whence hath this man this authority? By patent from the Crown, after election by a Synod, and when duly consecrated according to the rites of the Church! Now, if this form of government were set forth as a mere prudential arrangement,—the whole question of church polity being left open by our Lord and His apostles to the judgment of christians in different countries, and the Episcopal form being simply accepted as that adopted by the Church of England,—it would present less difficulty. But the Prayer Book, to all things contained in which the clergyman has to give his assent and consent, declares, (Preface to Ordination Services,) "It is evident unto all men diligently

reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these Orders of ministers in Christ's Church ; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." Says the Declaration of the Provincial Synod of Canada—" We maintain the form of Church Government by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as *Scriptural* and *Apostolical*." Is the candidate for orders prepared to profess this, in face of the facts, that "elder" or "presbyter," and "bishop," in Scripture, are synonymous terms (Acts. xx. 17 and 28, 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, Titus i. 5-7) ; that there were in apostolical times, as at Philippi and Ephesus, many "bishops" in one church (Phil. i. 1, Acts. xx. 28), and not one bishop over many churches ; and that the history of christianity so clearly traces the gradual rise of Diocesan Episcopacy in place of ministerial parity, side by side with many a doctrine which led on to that system of Popery of which prelacy is so essential a constituent ? The entire Anglican doctrine of "orders," without which a ministry is not valid, and to whose own validity due consecration by hands themselves duly consecrated, is indispensable, requires, for its logical completeness, that the Apostolical Succession be found for many a century of the "eighteen" only in the Romish Communion. Does that fountain send forth the water of life ? Shall we desert all others to drink only there ?

Though it may not be an insuperable objection, yet neither is it a consideration to be utterly passed by, that the system of Episcopal ordination is so *administered, practically*, that charity itself cannot believe or hope that due care is taken that true christians only be admitted to the ministry. True, this may be regarded as an accident rather than as of the essence, of the system, for the Bishop is to be satisfied that a candidate is "of virtuous conversation and without crime," and the congregation before whom the ordination

takes place is appealed to, to "declare if they know any impediment or notable crime, for the which he ought not to be admitted to that office." But when the church has pronounced him regenerate in Baptism, and accepted the renewal of his vows in Confirmation, can she ask afterwards more than ordinary morality? And when, under the influence of rich endowments, a cure of souls has been so long regarded, by members of the church and the law of England itself, in the light of a "benefice"—a "*living*,"—what bishop can stem the tide of worldlings rushing to the altar for the sake of the gold that covers it? Canadian Rectories are not so numerous nor so tempting as those in England. Very little patronage—though there is provision even for that—puts family livings within the reach of younger sons. But old habits remain. The influence of the English practice is widely felt. And the results, even here, are sometimes very sad. This feature, in the *practical working* of the system, claims the most earnest consideration of one proposing to place himself under it. For no small measure of the comfort and success of a ministry depends upon the character of the men with and under whom we are placed, who control the discipline, legislation, and policy of a church, and give a tone to the entire body.

But it is time to advance from these preliminary questions, to look into the personal *professions* made in receiving Episcopal ordination, the *duties* undertaken, and the *powers* conferred. With reference to all these matters, *the Act of Uniformity is in full force to this hour, in Canada as much as in England, and every candidate for "holy orders" must comply with its demands.* It requires adhesion to the three following Articles, taken from the 36th Canon.

"1. That the King's Majesty, under God, is the only Supreme Governor of this realm, and of all other his highness' dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesi-

astical things or causes, as temporal, and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions and countries.

"2. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully so be used; and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed, in public prayer, and in administration of the Sacraments, and none other.

"3. That he alloweth the book of the articles of religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562, and that he acknowledgeth all and every the articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

"To these three articles whosoever shall subscribe, he shall for the avoiding of ambiguities, subscribe in this order and form of words, setting down both his christian and surname, viz., *I, N. N., do willingly and ex animo subscribe to these three articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.*"

The following form is also required to be subscribed under authority of the same Act,—"*I A. B., do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book intituled, The Book of Common Prayer, &c.*"

Now, what are the things to which, in language so precise—"for the avoiding of ambiguities"—the clergyman thus binds his conscience?

I. *The Royal Supremacy.*—There have been many discussions as to the true intent of the ascription to the Sovereign of supremacy in "spiritual or ecclesiastical causes." The xxxvii article gives a very mild definition of it, merely denying that the Sovereign "is or ought to be, subject to any

foreign jurisdiction," and asserting that "we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's word or of the Sacraments,—but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all states and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil doers."

"The oath of the Queen's supremacy," administered by the Bishop during the ordination of a deacon, is but an abjuration of the jurisdiction of the Romish See over the Church, Sovereign, and Realm of England.

These terms and definitions do not of themselves suggest a sense that would trouble many of our consciences. But we know too well that the claim of Royal Supremacy did not and does not end here. The first claimant of such power, Henry VIII., renouncing the supremacy of the Pope, made himself the Pope of England. We need not quote in illustration the innumerable facts which the history of the Reformation supplies, nor thence derive our ideas of the claims asserted in our own century and our own land. Let the dead bury their dead. Nor do we adduce the Canons, with all their persecuting and excommunicatory provisions, worthy only of a council of Trent, since part are deemed obsolete even in England, and the worst of them are omitted from the list of such as it has been, in the Diocese of Toronto, deemed advisable to "re-adopt and declare in full force,"* while the question awaits the action of the Provincial Synod. But read in the Prayer-book of to-day "His Majesty's Declaration," prefixed to the "Articles of Religion." It is as follows:—

"Being by *God's ordinance*, according to our just Title, *De-*

* *Proceedings of Synod, Toronto, 1858, pp. 17—37, 1860, pp. 151, 181.*

fender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church, we hold it most agreeable to our kingly office, and our own religious zeal, to conserve and maintain the church committed to our charge, in the unity of true religion and in the bond of Peace, and and not to suffer unnecessary disputations, altercations, or questions to be raised, which may nourish faction both in the church and commonwealth. We have therefore, upon mature deliberation, and with the advice of so many of our Bishops as might conveniently be called together, thought fit to make this Declaration following:—

“That the Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the church of England agreeable to God’s word, which we do therefore ratify and confirm, REQUIRING ALL OUR LOVING SUBJECTS TO CONTINUE IN THE UNIFORM PROFESSION THEREOF, AND PROHIBITING THE LEAST DIFFERENCE FROM THE SAID ARTICLES.

“That We are the Supreme Governor of the Church of England: and that if any difference arise about the external policy, concerning the Injunctions, Canons, and other Constitutions whatsoever thereto belonging, the Clergy, in their Convocation, is to order and settle them, having first obtained leave under our Broad Seal so to do; and we approving their said Ordinances and Constitutions; providing that none be made contrary to the Laws and Customs of the Land.

“That out of our Princely Care that the Churchmen may do the work which is proper unto them, the Bishops and Clergy, from time to time in Convocation, upon their humble desire, shall have license under our Broad Seal to deliberate of, and to do all such things, as, being made plain by them, and assented to by Us, shall concern the Settled Continuance of the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England now established; from which we will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree.”

* * * * *

“That therefore in these both curious and unhappy differences, which have for so many hundred years, in different times and places, exercised the Church of Christ, WE WILL, THAT ALL FURTHER CURIOUS SEARCH BE LAID ASIDE,

and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the Articles of the Church of England according to them. And that NO MAN hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense."

* * * * *

Such a "Declaration" as this would not be put forth by our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria, in 1862, nor does her gracious Majesty dream of enforcing it; but enforced or not, the clerical subscriber solemnly affirms his free "assent and consent to *all* and *everything* herein contained." Moreover in the living present, and in our dis-established Colonial church, we have other proofs of the nature of the Royal Supremacy. By consent of the Crown, Diocesan Synods are allowed to elect their Bishops, but their Patents of office and the Warrants for their consecration must emanate from Her Majesty, so that the very continuance of the source of "orders" is so far dependent upon the Royal pleasure. As "an integral portion of the church of England and Ireland," Canadian churchmen must accept the decisions of a Law Court—the judicial committee of the Privy Council—as in the "Gorham case," upon what doctrines may be held by their clergyman. To their decision in that case the Bishop of Huron refers in his statement of 20th May. Not until the Queen so ordered it by her Proclamation, were they at liberty to cease to commemorate "King Charles the Martyr." Should another George IV. or Charles II. arise—God forbid!—he must be prayed for as "*our most religious king*." And whatsoever other changes may hereafter be enacted in Britain in the Prayer-book or the constitution of the church, must be obediently followed here. Its doctrine, worship,

and discipline, are in the hands of the Queen and her Parliament. To them must all petitions be addressed for Revision of the Liturgy; just as we read in the preface to the Prayer-book, that "great importunities were used to his sacred Majesty, that the said Book might be revised . . whereunto his Majesty . . did graciously condescend." It is an *Act of Uniformity* ordained by the Estates of the Realm, not by the Church, which has fixed the terms of clerical subscription. Free, comparatively, as the Canadian Branch of the church may be, she expressly declares in her Provincial Synod that she will "*confine*" her deliberations to "discipline," "temporalities," "regulations of order and modes of operation." The "Declaration" of the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto, which claims the honour of being the earliest Colonial Synod, says, "in adopting Synodical actions *upon such a principle*, we feel that *we shall not be infringing upon the Royal Prerogative*." These obvious facts prove that very much more than the Sovereign's supreme and exclusive authority over ecclesiastical persons, in ordinary matters of government, is involved in the acknowledgment of the Royal Supremacy. "The church is subject" to the State "in everything." From the State's point of view, who can deny the justice of the arrangement, where the church is endowed? If Cæsar pays the clergy, Cæsar has a right to say what work they shall do. Moreover, one can understand how a man like Dr. Arnold should uphold the Royal Supremacy as the great security of the church, inasmuch as, under constitutional government, this principle commits it to the common sense of the people of England, through their representatives, rather than to such a body as the convocation of the clergy. But are not the above consequences fatal alike to both principles, the connection with the State and the Supremacy of the Crown? Is it not monstrous that a church of Christ can hold no doctrine,

offer no prayer, and receive or reject no member or minister, except as prescribed by Act of Parliament? Can we subscribe to this Royal Supremacy? We yield to none in loyalty to our Sovereign; but "there is another King—one Jesus," and we must "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

II. The Second Article to which a clergyman must subscribe is the declaration, that "*nothing in the Prayer Book is contrary to the Word of God,*" and that *he will use its forms and no other in Divine Service.* Besides which, he has also to declare his "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained" and prescribed in that Book.

The question of *the Use of any Liturgy* is here involved. The Nonconformists of 1662 did not all object to forms in Public Worship, and many of their descendants think the entire disuse of them a reaction to an undesirable extreme. It may well be asked, Are forms and free prayer necessarily exclusive of each other? May we not enjoy the use—as *spoken in prose*—of the devotions of holy men of old, as well as when *sung in verse*? A hymn is a "form" of praise or prayer. Does it preclude the freshness and reality of worship? Are we sure that spoken prayers come always from the heart? Is it not wise to provide some place for the active participation of the people in Divine Worship besides the service of song? Are there not acts of Adoration, Thanksgiving, Confession, Prayer, and Intercession, which, under almost all circumstances, should form part of the Sabbath Service of the Sanctuary? And can these be expressed in language more befitting than is used in those Prayers of the Ages which Liturgies have culled and preserved? Is it often that we hear such prayers from living lips? Are we not often grievously disappointed by the limited conceptions of God's glory and man's want, by the inflated or common phraseology, and by the narrow range

or excessive length—perhaps both at once—of extemporaneous prayers? Do not the people need some provision that will render them less dependent on the gifts or graces of the preacher for the day? And is there not a thrilling inspiration in the thoughts, that we worship God in the very words of just men now made perfect, and that millions of tongues are, at the same hour, thus uttering their common supplications and thanksgivings? Thus, at all events, the leading Reformers thought, and Luther, Calvin, and Knox provided forms of prayer for the Protestant Churches of Germany, France, Switzerland, aye, *and of Scotland, too!* But while such arguments as these may be employed against the condemnation of all Liturgical services, there are very weighty ones also against the restriction of the worship of all Christian congregations, in all lands, in all ages, and under all circumstances, to one invariable form of words; and there are perils in the use of forms enough to vindicate those who object to them from the charge of mere blinded bigotry. A man *may* pray most formally without a book, but must it not be a great assistance and relief to one who has never learnt in his closet how to pray, and a great encouragement to take upon himself a work otherwise most difficult and irksome—that every word of his public prayers is prepared for him beforehand? Is it not such a system that *such a man* would most desire? And, therefore, does not the system of free prayer, in some measure, defend the pulpit from the intrusion of prayerless men? If prayers whose words are most devout are read by an undevout man, do not the words lose half their power over us as they fall from his lips, besides being an awful mockery? Can we not *pray better* when following the homelier language and the more contracted thought of some godly but ordinary man? Is it right to forbid the utterance of the glowing desires which the Spirit of the Lord may

breathe into the souls of his servants in that measure of fulness, in that form and relation, and in those words which the Pastor's heart at the time is led to employ? Ought men of all diversities of gifts to pray always and only in the same terms? Can there be no adaptation to passing circumstances—no such special remembrance of our widowed Queen (for example) as *we* are all at liberty to make, but which those cannot—except silently—who may pray for her now only in the same words as when the Prince Consort stood by her side, or only as they pray for all widows of every degree? Whence the Scriptural example or authority for so restraining our prayers? Amidst its many examples of free prayer, where is its Liturgy? Let these things be pondered well by any man who is asked to bind himself to use any one “form of words” in public prayer, “and no other.”

The English *Book of Common Prayer*, &c., now before us, acknowledges a strange origin and history. Part of its services have descended to us from an almost primitive antiquity; and of part their “speech bewrayeth” a Roman authorship. Here we trace the hand of a self-willed but most un-theological monarch; here the intervention of some sturdy reformer; and here the dabbling of a re-actionary archbishop. During the several reigns which elapsed between its first appearance and its final promulgation in its present form, the nation was swayed to and fro by divers spiritual and *unspiritual* forces, enjoyed little freedom, and found no rest. With sceptre or with crosier, now a Papist and now a Reformer ruled the people—and a strong rule verily it was. Fire and sword, bonds and death, for all who disobeyed the latest proclamation of infallible truth! A reforming heaven was steadily working among the people; but Popish traditions retained much power, and articles and services were altered again and again. “Two nations” were

"in the womb" of Mother Church, and "the children struggled together within her." "Two manner of people were born of her." And if "the one people" became "stronger than the other people, and the elder"—the Romish—was compelled to "serve the younger,"—since the latter bringing savoury meat to his father, the King, obtained the blessing and birthright—riches and dominion,—yet, with many fears, and costly offerings, and profoundest obeisances, did the Supplanter approach "my lord Esau." The Prayer-book is not one—a consistent whole; it abounds with compromises and contradictions. It is hard for us to see how any one man can "assent and consent to all and everything contained" in it.

But let us look a little more minutely into *the several forms of service* which the Anglican clergyman binds himself to use, and declares himself cordially to approve. Let us begin with "*the form and manner of ordering*" him a "*Priest*." It is for the most part a very solemn and (presupposing Episcopacy) appropriate form of setting apart a minister of the Gospel. But in the midst of it, the Bishop says to the candidate,—“Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.” Now, this is not said to the Deacon,—only to the Priest. Accordingly, the Deacon is not allowed to pronounce the “Absolution” in the morning and evening service. The Priest, moreover, in his most solemn duty, dealing with a dying man, is instructed to say, after receiving his confession, “Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath left power to his church, to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name of the Father,” &c. It is said that

these words are merely *declarative*,—as the form of absolution in the daily service is—in terms; but why does any man need “authority committed unto him,” simply to announce the *truth* of the words and promises of God? The form in the Visitation of the Sick is much more startling. *We know where that form comes from.* It is newer than the scriptures, older than the Reformation. The Romanising party are not slow to avail themselves of such expressions. They believe them and glory in them. Says Provost Whitaker of Trinity College, Toronto, in words by whose manifest sincerity we cannot but be touched—however erring we may deem them,—

“Did I not believe as I do,”—that is,—“that sin is forgiven, first in Baptism to infants, or to adults duly prepared by faith and repentance; and that, after Baptism, it is granted on repentance, which remission is declared in the authoritative absolution of the church, and sealed in the reception of the Holy Communion;” so that, in the words quoted from St. Chrysostom, “*Heaven waits and expects the priest’s sentence here on earth,*”—“Did I not believe as I do, I trust that I should not be still consenting to the act of past years, when I knelt before the Bishop and received, in the solemn words of our Ordinal, authority to execute the office of priest in the church of God. What mean these words, or are they ‘idle’ words: ‘*Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*’ My Lord, I have no wish to use language unduly severe, but I must be allowed to say that I cannot but regard men as labouring under a strange infatuation, when they make it matter of grave charge against a clergyman of the Church of England, that he does not adopt a scheme of doctrine, which, in his honest conviction, reduces the ministerial authority, thus solemnly bestowed, to a nullity; and renders an acquiescence in the form, by which the church professes to convey that authority, a mockery of the Most High. Are we to be required, as a matter of conscience, thus to bow ourselves down in the house of Rimmon, but of God; and to be branded as faithless to the most sacred obligations, if we

will not recklessly assume that 'the Lord' will 'pardon us in this thing?' "*.

Nor does it avail the more Protestant ministers of the Church to say that they *do not use* this form. They have declared that it is "not contrary to the Word of God," and that they yield an "unfeigned assent and consent to it."

Could you place yourselves under the Bishop's hands to "receive the Holy Ghost," and then go forth to *absolve men from their sins*?

May we turn aside at this point to look at the *vestments* in which our young clergyman is to attire himself as often as he performs Divine Service? As an abstract question, or one merely of taste, we should think very lightly of the wisdom of our *Puritan* ancestors for the fierce battle they fought, long before 1662, over the surplice. We may admit that a flowing robe is more graceful than almost any modern costume. We could count it, in itself, a matter of indifference whether a minister wore a black gown, which is an article of academic or official costume, or "fine linen, clean and white," symbolising "the righteousness of the saints." But that "linen ephod" has a history. It is not the garb of the scholar or the public officer, but the peculiar and exclusive apparel of a *Priest*—one who can offer sacrifice and forgive sins, and is a mediator between God and man. Fearing, therefore, and not without cause, that with the sacerdotal badge, sacerdotal pretensions should be retained, the Puritans "hated even the garment spotted by the flesh." In our own day, too, the party who claim priestly powers for the clergy have asserted them by wearing the surplice in the pulpit as well as the reading-desk. The Puritans were denounced as "factious," "disputatious," and "over-nice" when they made war against

* Two Letters to the Lord Bishop of Toronto in reply to charges brought by the Lord Bishop of Huron, &c., pp. 94, 53, 55.

a mere costume ; but a very little matter may be the symbol of a vital truth. The Stars and Stripes that floated over Fort Sumter were made of common bunting ; what matter though a cannon shot made a rent in it ?—that could soon be mended. But that piece of bunting was the emblem of the nation's authority ; in it the nation suffered ; and all the loyal North rose as one man to avenge its wrongs ! We would not be too scrupulous, nor make our fellowship with a church dependent on mere forms, which have been made an ill use of, but can be kept up innocently. Yet, at the least, may we not say—we covet not a “Babylonish garment ?”

Following our newly ordained priest into his various duties, we now find him *reading the “Order for morning and evening prayer.”* If the *principle* of forms be conceded, there can be no question as to the *general* excellence of *these* forms. Excessive length and needless repetitions, though blemishes, are not sufficient reasons for Nonconformity. In spite of our strong repugnance to many things in the Prayer Book, our hearts do burn within us as we join in these broken and contrite confessions, these lofty songs of praise, these comprehensive and yearning intercessions. We are sensible of the advantage of incorporating so much scripture into each service. We feel the animation excited by the variety and completeness of the whole and the brevity of the several parts. But even in these services there are words we find it hard to use. The Apostle's creed (so-called) makes us say—“I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.” In the sense of “the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven,” we do—but was this the sense that the compilers of this creed intended ? The Creed of St. Athanasius' Creed is sometimes substituted. Are we prepared to say of all its metaphysical elaborations of the doctrine of the Trinity—“This is the Catholic faith ; which ex-

cept a man believe faithfully, *he shall without doubt perish everlastingly.*" In the Nicene Creed, said in the Communion service, are these clauses, "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." In this later profession, we see the growth of the doctrine of the church, and we have the new article concerning Baptism. Can we understand the latter in any evangelical, Protestant, scriptural sense? And is it not a vital defect, pervading the entire book, that the whole congregation are supposed to be true christians, there being no discrimination attempted in these services?

After the Second Lesson the Clergyman has to administer *Baptism*, which he must do according to the form provided, and no other. Let us briefly analyse it. After some exhortations and prayers, in which, so far as they assure of "the good-will of our heavenly Father towards this infant," and pray for the Holy Spirit to regenerate him, we could heartily join,—though we know not what is that "*mystical washing away of sin*" to which water is said to have been sanctified by our Saviour's Baptism,—we come to the Baptismal Covenant itself. This is not made with *the parents*, respecting *their* duty in bringing him up in the fear of God,—but, strange to say, with the unconscious babe himself!! Three sureties, *not* being *its* parents,—"*God-fathers and God-mothers,*"—IN THE CHILD'S NAME, "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh,"—profess steadfast belief in the Apostles' Creed,—declare his desire to be baptised in that faith,—and promise to keep God's commandments all the days of his life!!! We do not dwell on the lightness with which these solemn vows are so often made, the merely complimentary relation of sponsorship in the vast majority of cases,—these evils are conceivably

curable,—and Bishops in Convocation have bewailed them, and moved for liberty to receive parents as sponsors,—but take the case at the best, suppose minister, parents, and God-parents to be devout and believing,—how is it possible that one person can answer for another who does not know his right hand from his left, in this manner? Could we ask and receive pledges which the sureties have no power whatever to cause the child to fulfil, or, in case of failure, themselves to make good? What is such suretyship worth? These answers being given, however, the child is baptised, and signed with the cross, (which we do not find in our Bibles, though it *is* in the Romish Missal,) and “then shall the priest say, ‘Seeing how, dearly beloved, *that this child is regenerated*, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church, let us give thanks,’” &c.,—which is done in these terms, “that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church.” The office closes with an *exhortation* merely to the sponsors, —no pledge being taken for what they *can* do!—to do *their* duty, namely, to have the child instructed and trained religiously. Such is the Baptismal Service of the Church of England, which was one of the most decisive reasons for the nonconformity of the 2,000, and is with many an honest man the chief cause of nonconformity to this day. At its first reading, does it not strike every one as declaring, in the most unequivocal terms, the new birth—in the highest sense—of every baptised child? How then, can Evangelical men use and explain it? On this wise, one section, the Calvinistic, tells us. The child by his sureties professes repentance and faith; the Church must presume that that profession is true; and on that hypothesis and condition, pronounce him regenerate. If the child’s vow is not fulfilled, the regeneration also fails. When, by special

grace, regeneration is wrought, it may take place either before, at, or after baptism, but is not tied to the rite itself. Indeed, it is admitted that regeneration at the time is the rare exception. So said Mr. Gorham in his celebrated suit with the Bishop of Exeter, and so writes Mr. Goode in a work, which is the acknowledged standard on the same side. But of all this possible, conditional, hypothetical regeneration, this charitable assumption yet utter uncertainty,—*the service says not a word!* There is no doubt hinted there. Language could not express an idea in stronger and clearer terms, than those that are employed, if the idea meant to be conveyed were that no failure or doubt was conceivable. Not only so, but the regeneration is expressly connected with the act of Baptism, as where in the office for Private Baptism it is said, “this child, being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now *by the laver of Regeneration in Baptism*, received into the number of the children of God and heirs of everlasting life;” and again, “this child is *by Baptism* regenerate.” Throughout, it is the “water” that “mystically washes away sin.” Again, what theology is this that makes repentance and faith antecedents and conditions of regeneration, rather than its results and evidences? And at the foundation of the entire explanation, lies that impossible suretyship. Could we, with such explanations, promise to administer this ordinance according to the form prescribed in the Prayer-Book?

On the other hand, there does seem to be the true ring of manly consistency in such declarations as we now proceed to quote. The Bishop of Toronto, addressing the Synod of his diocese, in June, 1861, says,

“We hold every article and word of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and believe them to be the expression of divine truth, in its simplest and most pregnant form. . . . We desire no change in the Prayer Book, no retrench-

ment or alterations, for we need none. *We can accept and use its well-weighed expressions, without recourse to figurative or hypothetical interpretations.* When in confirming we say to God, that He hath vouchsafed to regenerate these His servants, on whom we have been laying hands, by water and the Holy Ghost, we mean by these words just what the plainest person in the congregation understands us to mean, and have no mental reservations or applications. When we teach our children, as the Catechism directs, that in baptism they are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, we believe them to have the right to say so, and that what they say is the truth as revealed by our Lord and Saviour."

Provost Whitaker, defending himself against the Bishop of Huron, says,

"Are we to be required again, as a matter of conscience, to attach a *non-natural* sense to that article of our creed, which we as ministers, and the people with us, solemnly confess whenever the Communion Service is read, 'I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins?' . . . If I could not accept the teaching of the Baptismal Service and of the Catechism in its plain and obvious sense, I would not consent for another day to discharge my office as a minister of the Church of England."*

Nor is this ground taken in Canada alone. A member of the Colonial Episcopate at the antipodes, the Lord Bishop of Tasmania, may be referred to as showing that the same spirit animates the many scattered members of the one body. In a publication called forth by some local controversy, he denies "that the compilers of the Liturgy were so double-minded in their dishonesty as to *say* what they *did not intend*; to *assert*, categorically, what they *MEANT* hypothetically."† In support of this, he quotes these words from Dr. Wordsworth, Canon of Westminster, a son of the great poet:—

* Two Letters, *ut supra*, pp. 94, 95.

† Taken from *Church Life in Australia*, pp. 108-111.

"If the words of the English Church in the English Prayer Book are not to be understood in their plain, simple, literal English sense; if, when she says, 'seeing, dearly beloved, this child is *now* regenerate,' she is *not* to be understood to mean that the child *is* regenerate, then doubt, suspicion and scepticism will lurk beneath her altars, and steal into the most solemn mysteries of religion. Then, *faith in subscriptions to Articles will be no more*; and all confidence in her teaching and in that of her ministers will be destroyed; and so a grievous penalty will be inflicted on her and them; a heavy injury will be sustained by her people; and *the English name and nation will sink low in the scale of honesty, sincerity, and truth.*"

Once more, at a meeting of Bishops held in Sydney, New South Wales, in 1850, the following declaration was adopted: "We believe that *it is the doctrine of our Church that all infants do, by baptism, receive this grace of regeneration*"—that is, as just defined by themselves, a "work of God," by which those who are its subjects "die unto sin, and rise again unto righteousness, and are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." Returning now to Canada, we find the Bishop of Toronto, in his Charge of 1847,* using this extract from the Sermons of Rev. Henry Melvill:† "That the Church of England does hold, and does teach, Baptismal Regeneration, would never, we must venture to think, have been disputed, had not men been anxious to remain in her Communion and yet to make her formularies square with their private notions. We really think that no fair, no straightforward dealing, can get rid of the conclusion, that the Church holds what is called Baptismal Regeneration. You may dislike the doctrine, you may wish it expunged from the Prayer Book; but so long as I *subscribe to* that Prayer Book, and so long as I *officiate according to the forms* of that Prayer Book, I do not see

*Page 55.

†Vol. II., Sermon 8.

how I can be *commonly honest* and yet deny that every baptised person is, on that account, regenerate."

Upon this, Dr. Strachan goes on to say—and certainly speaks as a representative man—"concurring as I do, in these observations, it may be useful to remark, that *the doctrine of the church is, that in Baptism the penalty attached to the first transgression is removed, and the sin forgiven; but she does not maintain that all baptised persons, are by virtue of this sacrament placed them in a path which must of necessity lead them to eternal life; or that the end of our christian calling is accomplished. The church does not teach that every branch engrafted on the mystical body of Christ shall bear fruit unto everlasting salvation. Many of those who deny the doctrine of regeneration, so clearly taught by the church, are carried away with the opinion that she teaches that those who are once regenerate must ever continue so, and advance in holiness; but this is an error. Baptism is the commencement of a new life, hence it is called a new birth; but it is not the whole of that new life, and must be sustained by a living faith, working through love. The gifts and privileges it confers may be lost; men may resist and do resist God, and hold his grace in unrighteousness; they become withered branches, though still attached to the vine; and this is their condemnation, for the sins of men baptised are far worse than the sins of the heathen.*"

The writer heard a West Indian clergyman, during the homeward passage of the *Great Eastern*, in August, 1861, use language to this effect, in the course of a sermon in which he had spoken of "the regenerating dew coursing down your infant cheek,"—"Do you ask me, 'What? *are there Christians in hell?*' undoubtedly; *multitudes of them.*"

You may think it strange to find among these believers in Baptismal Regeneration, *the present Archbishop of Canter-*

bury, Dr. John Bird Sumner, who has so long been looked up to as an evangelical leader, and is such an honourable exception to the customary exclusiveness of Bishops. How far he represents the *Arminian* section of the Low Church clergy, the writer cannot say, but the views of the Primate of All England, can hardly fail to be those of many of his brethren. In a work on "Apostolical Preaching," first published in 1824 and re-issued in 1850—during the Gorham controversy—the Archbishop argues against the doctrine of "special grace,"* "that it implies the necessity of *some test of God's favour*, and of the reconciliation of Christians unto Him, *beyond and subsequent to the covenant of Baptism*"—"that it *reduces Baptism to an empty rite*, an external mark of admission into the visible Church, *attended with no real grace*, and therefore *conveying no real benefit*, nor advancing a person one step towards salvation." Again, "*how is this fact of regeneracy, upon which no less than eternity depends, to be discovered?*" The Apostle enumerates the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit; *but his test is insufficient*, (!) for the two lists are here mixed and confounded. The hearers appeal to *the Church, an authorised interpreter of Scripture*. (!!) The Church acquaints them, that *they were themselves regenerated, and made the children of grace, by the benefit of baptism*." "No preacher is, therefore, authorised, either by our Church, or by St. Paul, to leave a doubt on the mind of his hearers whether they are within the pale of God's favour."

Thus, it is clear, that all who hold that Regeneration invariably takes place in Baptism—whether High or Low Church—do so *in the Arminian sense*. Only in that sense, indeed, could the doctrine be held at all. *The Church of Rome holds it in the same manner.*

* Quoted in *The Great Gorham case*, by John Search, pp. 11-20, 234-241.

But can *we* allow a doctrine, which forbids us to say to men once outwardly baptised, however they may be living, "Ye must be born again?" which virtually supercedes Justification by Faith? which makes God's "free Spirit" wait upon the act of some human priest? which contradicts the Apostle Peter (1 Peter iii. 21), who declares, indeed, that "Baptism doth save us," but "*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*" ("water mystically washing away sin"), but the answer of a good conscience towards God?" and which says that Christ's sheep *can* be "plucked out of his Father's hand?"

The next duty naturally devolving on the Anglican priest, is the preparation of candidates for *Confirmation*. In this, he must teach them the Church Catechism, which is constructed on the principle of teaching doctrine and duty in the form of a *personal profession of faith* on the part of the child! Yet is it taught to all indiscriminately, without, as we fear, any effort to ascertain whether the words can be spoken in truth or not. And what are the doctrines so taught? The child is made to say—"In my Baptism I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," that the sacraments are "generally necessary to salvation," and that "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." Shall this be our manual for Catechumens? When youths can repeat the Catechism, the Rubric says, that the curate shall bring to the bishop for Confirmation such "*as he shall think fit.*" This *allows* the exercise of discriminating fidelity, and *some* clergymen do not fail to avail themselves of it, while the *language* is such as to save the conscience of one giving "assent and consent" to it: but *usage*, often stronger than the letter of the law, admits *all* who have "come to years of discretion" to the rite which confers on them the full

privileges of church membership. The Confirmation Service begins with a renewal, on their own behalf, of the Baptismal vows, in which respect it is as explicit a profession and covenant as *any* church could require, were it properly applied; but at this step again the Almighty is addressed as "*having* vouchsafed to regenerate these his servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and *having* given them forgiveness of all their sins." Could you say that so confidently, with a clear conscience?

All who have been confirmed are entitled to come thereafter to *the Lord's Table*, unless forbidden by the Curate, who may keep back "an open and notorious evil liver," one "who has done any wrong to his neighbour by word or deed," and "those betwixt whom malice and hatred reign,"—until they manifest repentance. Here there *seems* to be provision for discipline; but practically what does it amount to? The rule, however, protects the assentor, *if* he can be assured that the provision that "the congregation may be satisfied, which before were offended" with the "open and notorious" sinner, as it is carried out, sufficiently complies with the requirement addressed to the church,—"*Put away from among yourselves that wicked person,*" and the like. The actual working of the system is, that all may communicate who choose to come forward. Are we prepared to consent to this? The Communion Service itself does not suggest many scruples. It is one of great pathos and beauty. Here and there is a dubious hint on the subject of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, which, with the terms "holy mysteries," and the *kneeling at the altar* savour too much of the Mass to comport with the scriptural idea of a joyous and familiar "feast" of "remembrance," are most easily interpreted by multitudes of Churchmen in anything but a Protestant sense, and have required guarding in the book itself, from very natural inferences.

We have already referred to the service for *the Visitation of the Sick*, and its startling form of absolution; so we pass on at once to the *Burial Service*, the last office which the clergyman performs for those under his spiritual care. We find no fault with the service itself when read at the funeral of a true believer: it is most consolatory and elevating: but it is *the Burial Service* and is read over all alike, however they may have lived and died. When the minister says that "it hath pleased Almighty God *of his great mercy to take unto himself* the soul of *our dear brother* here departed;" and that they "commit his body to the ground in *sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life*;" and *thanks* Him, "with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity," "that it hath pleased Him *to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world*,"—does it not declare the eternal safety of the departed? No wonder that it is felt to be such a sore burden by conscientious clergymen, and that some 4,000 lately petitioned for relief, though all in vain!

Such are the Liturgical forms to which, at his ordination, the clergyman declares his entire adherence, and which alone he binds himself to use. Do they, as a whole, or in their several parts, command such confidence in you? Is it thus you can serve God in his sanctuary? Or would you not rather, once committed, and committed for life, "groan under sorrows, which you dare not utter, from the pressure upon you of harrowing thoughts on the language of these formularies?" Would it not need "terrible toil, intense and unavailing, to repress doubts, and sophisticate the understanding, and to find an interpretation that might be held as harmonising with Scriptural truth? And what stabs, and darts, and shootings through the soul of the

flaming arrows of shame and remorse, as ever and anon, while the words of the book were breathed to heaven, repugnance to their meaning lacerated the heart! No decision of Committee of Privy Council,—no authoritative legal deliverance, fixing a sense or tolerating differences, could reach the core and eradicate the causes of a disease like this! *Nothing would do but a change in the offices of the Church themselves.*”*

III. We have little space left for dwelling on the *Articles of Religion*, which must be pronounced “agreeable to the Word of God.” Certainly, an Evangelical Christian can find himself more at home among these than among the Offices just referred to. But in this very fact lies our difficulty in accepting *both*, as we are required to do. The two opposing parties in the Church take refuge, one in the Articles and the other in the Liturgy, and thence denounce each other as in deadly error. One says that the Liturgy must be interpreted by the Articles, and the other reverses this rule, both thus confessing the opposition between the two. The Liturgy is largely inherited from the Papacy. The Articles are the fruit of the Reformation. They are, on the whole, Calvinistic in their Theology. The IXth contains a strong statement of the doctrine of “Original Sin.” The Xth is equal to the Westminster Confession on the subject of “Free Will.” The XIth, XIIth and XIIIth are very clear on “Justification by Faith,” and “Good Works.” The XVIIth is most explicit on the topic of “Predestination.” On the subject of the Church, we could scarcely desire a better definition of our own views than that in the XIXth,—“A* visible Church of Christ is a *congregation of faithful (believing) men*, in the which *the pure Word of*

* *Great Gorham Case*, pp. 159, 160.

* Archbishop Whateley's rendering of the Latin, *Visibilis*.

God is preached, and the Sacraments duly ministered *according to Christ's ordinance*, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." But Art. XX gives the Church "power to *decree Rites and Ceremonies*, and *authority in Controversies of Faith*." The XXist forbids a General Council being gathered "without the commandment of Princes"—Royal Supremacy! Art. XXVII, on Baptism, is not free from a sacramentarian tinge, though it by no means comes up to the standard of the Liturgy. Nor are there wanting other traces of a "churchly" spirit here and there, which have opened the door to many errors.

We have now gone over the requisites to Episcopal ordination, and may be better prepared to answer the question, "Can we conform, when the approval required is so complete, but the standards are so contradictory, some of them so unscriptural, as we cannot help reading the Scriptures?" Shall we resort, in using terms so stringent, to the "non-natural sense?" Is it honest? Could we do it in secular affairs and be true men?

Will the *animus-imponentis* principle help us? according to which, not the "literal and grammatical sense" of the words, but *the intention of the Church*, is to be our guide to the import of subscription. But what *does* the Church believe, say on the fundamental question of Baptism? We have Bishop against Bishop—the Articles against the Liturgy—and the Sovereign, the Head of the Church, says *both parties* are good churchmen, and may hold their livings! To what, then, are we to subscribe as the truth on this question?

Shall we wait for *Liturgical Revision*? Even then, we must wait *outside*, not being at liberty to make declarations we do not believe in the hope that by and by they will not be required. But what is the prospect of revision? The Archbishop of Canterbury dared not encourage the peti-

tioners in the matter of the Burial Service to hope for any success, for if they once began to alter, what might it not lead to, and where would it stop? The book has age, custom, prestige, and world-wide use on its side. A large party are ready to defend its every jot and tittle. The timid and easy, who dread every agitation and change, will throw all their weight into the same scale. The revisors—if clergymen—have already declared their “unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained” therein. Can they now make out a strong case on the other side? We see little prospect of any relief in this direction.

What if *the terms of subscription* imposed by the Act of Uniformity could be altered, though the Liturgy were not revised? Such a measure has just been brought forward in the House of Lords, by Lord Ebury, but—of course—withdrawn again. Even had it passed, what had been its effect? Says a Church journal,—“that, provided a man promises to *use* a religious formulary, he is under no obligation to *agree* with it. The sensitive persons for whom the measure is introduced are to have the privilege of saying that *they never pledge themselves to the truth of the words they utter.*”

“But do not many good men subscribe? Surely they do it with good conscience. Cannot I do the same?” When Peter asked the Lord concerning John, “And what shall *this man* do?”—the Master sharply replied, “*What is that to thee? Follow thou me!*” “To his own Master he standeth or falleth.” Our conscience is no rule for our neighbour; *neither is his for us.* “*Every one of us shall give account of himself unto God. Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.*” Are you satisfied in your own mind, that you

can take these vows in sincerity and truth? "Whatsoever is *not of faith*, is sin."

Thus there seems no escape from the necessity of non-conformity, on our religious principles. It is a very simple matter—*We do not believe the things we should be required to say; and therefore we cannot say them.* It is nothing either to boast or be ashamed of, that in such a transaction, above all, we want to speak the truth. We have honestly endeavoured to get at the core and substance of the question to consider what *must* be said and done in "taking orders," that which no man can be a clergyman *without* saying and doing, and we find that we cannot say and do them. This is enough. Whatever attractions we may find in some features of the church system, however much we may admire and love some churchmen, or, again, whatever other objections we may have to the Church of England, in matters of taste, judgment, or even principle, this *essential* impossibility settles the question. Our fathers did right, in coming out, for the like reasons, in 1662, and we, in staying out, are thankful to be able to join such a goodly company.

And if such is the duty of *ministers*, does a *less obligation lie on like-minded private individuals*? They are not required, it is true, to sign the declaration just examined, but "by regular, acquiescent, silent conformity they give their support to the whole of a system, a system which they think, tempts members to say what makes their public position intolerable and false. They perpetuate this. They help to rivet on the necks of many a heavy burden which they should rather endeavour to lessen or remove."* On the other hand, they leave the Pastors who are suffering for their conscientious Nonconformity to suffer alone. Ought they not

* *Church Life in Australia*, p. xxxiii.

to do something more than commend—to stand by and help them? But does not a lay member of the Church take part in these very services? In Baptism, for instance, does he not adopt the office as much as the officiating minister? If he brings up his children under the Prayer Book, can they escape the influence of such an atmosphere? Ought a man to be a member of a Church who is in constant protest against its plainest teaching? Is it right for such an one, for the sake of social advantages, or even for some measure of religious gratification, to conform?

Finally, let it be the aim of us all to make our Nonconformist Churches not merely protestors against evil without, but themselves so pure, so large-hearted, so earnest, so devout, and so peaceable, that there shall be *no temptation* for a *good* man to seek a religious home elsewhere. Not by separation from any erring church, but by living union to Christ, shall we fully vindicate our claim to have descended from the Confessors of 1662. May “a double portion of their spirit be upon us!”