

acts of Uniformity now in force forbid any even the slightest, departure from the prescribed forms and ritual of the Prayer Book,—*eg.*, the Act of Elizabeth, which every Clergyman of the Church of England agrees to and subscribes—specifies certain alterations which were made in 1559, and adds, “none other, or otherwise.” This Act is ratified by the Act of 1662, and the original preface to the Prayer Book points in the same direction, saying that “Whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity . . . in churches within the realm, now from henceforth all the whole realm shall have but one use.” To this also every clergyman of the Church of England assents and subscribes before he can perform any official act.

Others shelter themselves under the so-called “Ornaments Rubric,” but this will not avail them, for even if the ornaments rubric should be regarded as possessing the same authority as other rubrics, the ornaments rubric relates only to ornaments. It does not relate to prayers and doctrine, and rites and ceremonies, and orders and forms, and the manner of celebrating the Supper of the Lord.

Others, again, take refuge under the recent judgment of the Archbishop of Canterbury—as authorizing the use of certain ritualistic practices—but neither will this avail them. It is true the Archbishop’s judgment was sustained on appeal. But it should be remembered that, however worthy of consideration such a judgment may be, it is difficult to reconcile it either with historical facts or existing statutes. The judgment of the Archbishop is not co-extensive with the judgment of the Church of England. Manifestly, it ought not to have any legal force if it can be proved that it conflicts with the Acts of Uniformity. The Archbishop himself avows that its decisions stand only on the supposition that the ritual acts in question have no doctrinal significance, in which case the Archbishop’s judgment is not applicable, and becomes practically superfluous, for there is no dispute with Ritualists whose ritualism is evacuated of all doctrinal significance. I may consider them foolish in the adoption of such unmeaning practices and such unsuitable agencies for the advancement of spiritual life; but I do not believe that there are any Ritualists in the present day who belong to this class, Ritualists themselves being the witnesses. And I would only add that if ritual acts are intended to signify doctrine, and that