

the only dress recognized by the Canon, and the introduction of a gown into any part of the service has only the warranty of custom. There is no claim of a rubric for it, as there is for the vestments at the Eucharist; and they who protest against the latter have no plea on which the use of the former can be defended. The change of dress also breaks the unity of the Communion Office, of which the sermon is a part. There is therefore no sounder and safer course which the Church can adopt in these days of what is called Ultra-Ritualism, than the universal use of the surplice, stole, and hood, as the only dress of the clergy.

THE HYMN BEFORE THE SERMON has been given up for one of the reasons assigned for giving up the gown. We have no authority for it.

THE PRAYER IN THE PULPIT BEFORE THE SERMON is also dropped for the same reason,—there is no authority for it.

THE CHANTING OF THE PSALMS has become, I trust and believe, a help and a pleasure to us all, since our choir became fit to lead us well in this joyous portion of our service. So long as we wanted a good and easy lead the chanting would have been a hindrance to devotion. Now I am sure it is a help. It makes that portion of our service so much more elevating, so much more what praise should be.

If we sing the Psalms and Canticles, then praise has its proper place and proportion in our service of prayer. Otherwise it forms but a small part of it, for there is no rubric for any other hymn in the morning than that which is called the anthem after the third Collect. The hymn sung after the Litany is a kind of interlude between two services.

A SURPLICED CHOIR has been the natural consequence of a good and earnest band of singers, and of a church-like church. In the old church it would have been unnatural and unseemly to have had a surpliced choir singing from a western gallery. In the new church it would be as unnatural not to place the choir in the choir, when such has been provided.

The Sisterhood now settled amongst us requires little commendation from me. The practical blessing of that work is felt daily. There are few houses in the parish that have not in some way experienced, either in sickness, or sorrow, or misfortune, the healing of their touch, the elevation of sanctity, the comfort of their kindness. Our village hospital is now the centre of their operations, and from that, as light and heat radiate from the sun, so their love and care pervade us all. We learnt their value first in those times when men are most candid, when sorrow and death stared them in the face, and will not let them be unreal. Lessons learnt in the presence of such teachers are rarely forgotten.

Thus has God led us on step by step, trying and proving each other,—learning that to unlearn self, and to learn Christ, is our one great life-lesson upon earth. We can now trust each other thoroughly—thank God for this; and though it would be unnatural to suppose that things will flow on as smoothly to the end of our days, still if we all, owning one rule of life—His Word,—acknowledging one rule of faith and conduct—our Book of Common Prayer,—and guided by one rule of spirit—love to Christ,—strive to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. He Whom we are, and Whom we serve, will keep us close to Himself, and therefore not far from each other.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REPLY.

Delightful, indeed, are your details of the new church; its consecration; your Christmas services; your midnight service; and that well-ordered Eucharistic feast, which consecrated the first hour of the new year. God has certainly largely blessed you in sending you such a pastor, and in giving you all grace to go hand in hand with him through your common work. It was not his work a whit more than it was yours, though he was the suggester and leader.

The address is a valuable summary of what has been done, and embraces almost every point of chief importance in carrying out the provisions of the church. If her members would only throw all their energies into such a course as you have taken in your parish, namely, the cultivation, to

the utmost perfection attainable, of all that is within the reach of all, as set forth in our Book of Prayer; then such an amount of healthy vigour would be vouchsafed her as would place her beyond the reach of fear of danger, and enable her to throw out of her system everything unhealthy or injurious.

Even as matters now are, I do not think she was ever in a more hopeful condition since the days of the Reformation. Once she had dropped into a cold formalism which looked like death; but the dormant evangelic life woke up at God's call, and stirred within her nobly. The human elements in her renewed earnestness tending to the opposite extreme, she was drifting away from the landmarks of her course, through her dread of shoals and quicksands, when the return wave brought her back to apostolic truth and order; and, though in its reflux it swept many away, and noble wrecks lie stranded on the beach to mark its course, still the whole church gained in deep earnest piety, and grave imperishable truth.

A reaction against what some deemed too dogmatic teaching became a natural thing, and Rationalism has been another sweep of the wave in the mighty currents of thought.

The waves may toss and swelter to and fro, as if each would be in its own sweep triumphant and overwhelming; but "the Lord sitteth above the waterfloods," and "the Lord remaineth a king for ever." And, if we can only trust Him, and each do his duty humbly in his own way, the Lord shall give strength unto His people; the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.

We have but to wander back a very little way, and gather evidence of this at every step. When were men more alarmed for their church than when the Sacrament of Holy Baptism was assailed—and in the estimation of many she was supposed by the decree of a final tribunal to have lost it altogether? So much so, indeed, that a witty member of the Roman Catholic Church is related to have said, under the semblance of condolence, what was meant as the bitterest sarcasm: "Poor people! they had but two sacraments! How hard that now one only is left them!" And yet when did the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration become so freely discussed, so generally received, so widely believed in, as since that decision, deemed to be so fatal at the time?

Again, when, by a later controversy respecting the other sacrament, men's minds were disturbed, and fears were entertained that the Church's doctrine of the Real Presence would be endangered; the result was a deeper examination of, and sounder faith in this vital truth, than had possessed the English mind for years before.

Meanwhile, let us remember and act upon the old proverb: "Let every man sweep before his own door." For churches, for parishes, for individuals, this is the surest element of progress and union. This is the best and most practical effort for an "Eirenicon," that Churches or men can pursue. In a house and in a parish the nearer all hearts draw to Christ the nearer to each other. In the Church and in the world the same rule holds. Let the accommodation of all our feelings, habits, doctrines, and ways, be made to Christ and for His sake. Hearts and Churches that are one with Him must be one with each other. The attempt to reconcile ourselves to each other, except through Him, must ever be a failure. Time is better spent in self-reformation than in any other reformation. We may fail in altering what is wrong without us. We cannot fail in altering what is wrong within, if we take the right way.

Let us at the same time avoid as much as possible all signs and words as the best means of getting rid of all feelings of party. There is no such fuel for the fire of party hate as nicknames and watchwords. Shibboleths and slayings have an old and almost necessary connection. Why should one set of good men sneer at what they call the "Sacramental system," and talk of the word "Church" as if, when used, it is intended by the user to fill a place where "Christ" ought to be; and convey by their manner that they who hold the doctrines of "Baptismal Regeneration" and the "Real Presence" cannot be sound, or teachers of Evangelic truth? and suppose that every one who uses the word "Priest" uses it in a wrong sense, instead of a right one, and imply

that the only safe way in which to speak of "Confession and Absolution" is to use such words as if they had really no meaning at all? Why should men carry controversy so sadly even into their devotions, that they shun to sing those beautiful words—

"Jesus, Son of Mary, hear,"

and have so far prevailed with an old Church Society (alas! that it should be so!) as to get, in a later reprint of their hymns, other words substituted for them? As if "Son of David," which speaks of royal lineage, were the same to a poor man, or a tender-hearted, human-hearted man, as "Son of Mary;" that incarnation, if I may so say, of the Incarnation, that softest, sweetest, most homely tie that can bind our weakness to God's strength, the human to the Divine? Why should, I say, one set of good men keep up, both outside and inside God's house, these ways and watchwords of party until even bowing the head at the Sacred Name is looked upon as a party sign? While another set, just as good as they, are doing the same thing from an opposite direction, using the words "Evangelical" and "Protestant" as terms of reproach; and thus leading others to suppose that they slight the Gospel, and regret the Reformation. In their right sense words are full of important meaning. We are Catholics as regards the truth we retain; and we have no right to call ourselves Churchmen (which means members of Christ's Body the Church), if we are not Evangelic.

I remember once, when a candidate-curate, writing to me about his opinions, said he was "an Evangelical." My reply was: "If you are an Evangelical in a party sense, I want you not; but unless you are evangelical in the true sense of the term you would not suit me."

Our use, or rather misuse, of these words, and many more of like kind, does great mischief. It keeps alive in our own hearts a sense of separation and discord; and it misleads others as to our real opinions, rousing the very prejudices and misapprehensions which it should be the purpose of our lives to allay.

We, the clergy, also ought to be particularly forbearing, knowing as we do that either by ourselves, or others of our order, the laity have been led into those errors of faith and practice from which now, if we cannot lead, some of us would be fain to drive them. All that the Church movement for the last thirty or forty years has been struggling against and trying to change are the opinions and habits formed in the minds of their flocks through the carelessness or ignorance or unsoundness of the clergy.

A remarkable illustration of this came before me once in Ireland. An old rector, who had held a small country parish for more than half a century, having been persuaded by his family to get a curate, and give over, for the winter at least, his accustomed work, did so, and for the time being retired from his duties. The first Sunday on which the new curate officiated, there were great searchings of hearts around the church-door, and in mutinous corners of the church-yard, after service. Some terrible innovation he had been guilty of, and men shook their heads with horror, to think that, after so many years of very quiet life, indeed—for there had been apparently no stirring of the waters during all that time,—at last this pest innovation had found them out.

The more zealous and faithful were for open and instant resistance. The more gentle and kindly suggested that he was a young man, perhaps new to his work, and therefore liable to make mistakes, which a little more experience would rectify. They therefore pleaded for and obtained, a respite. Another trial was to be given him, and the next Sunday was looked for with the utmost anxiety by the whole parish. But, alas! it brought not the expected relief. The offence was deliberately repeated. Then, of course, stringent measures became necessary; and so the nearest town was sought, and a well-known attorney,—whose religious fervour and party spirit brought many a six-and-eightpence into his pocket which would never otherwise have been there,—was resorted to. The man of law and Gospel scented at once the game, in pursuit of which he took particular delight. A fair sheet of foolscap was taken, and a fresh pen dipped into the ink, as he sat wait-