

thankful that our Church is as faithful to true Catholic principles as the Roman Church, which he here holds up as being alone faithful to the law of Christ. Indeed, *we are more so*, for it was by her pretended dispensations that that Church first gave excuse for interfering with the great principle of the in inviolability of the marriage bond among Christians. And, surely, in such an outcome we may see the terrible danger of admitting any pretext for the dissolution of marriages. Joseph Hume in his *Philosophical Works* (vol. iii, p. 208), well said, "We must consider that nothing is more dangerous than to unite two persons so closely in their interests and concerns, as husband and wife, without rendering the union *entire and total*. The least possibility of a separate interest must be the source of endless quarrels and suspicions."

And if the *indissolubility* of the marriage bond so that there can be no re-marriage of those who are divorced is, as it *undoubtedly is*, the *present law of the Church*; but if that law is now very frequently forgotten, owing to misunderstanding with regard to what the civil law permits, surely it is right that we should make it more evident and distinct lest any of our Clergy or our Laity, through inadvertence or want of knowledge, contract alliances which they afterwards learn to be contrary to the law of the Church. As the resolutions of the Canterbury Convocation which I have before quoted well say, "To commit the solution of questions of this nature to the *unaided discretion of individual Clergymen* is to them a matter of great hardship, and to the Church a source of danger and discredit."

It must be distinctly remembered that even if the Synod should refuse to add this to its Canons, it will in no way make that to be legal which the Church declares to be illegal. It will only be refusing to give increased publicity to that law, as a safeguard to its members. Should any Clergyman appeal to me as to what was his duty if a divorced person re-married presented himself or herself to receive the Holy Communion I should still consider it my solemn though painful duty to instruct him that he must *refuse such a person*, as, in the eye of the law of the Church, if not in the law of the land, living in adultery.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

1784-1884.

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The close of the struggle for national independence brought to the Churchmen who had sympathized with the principles of the Revolution problems of great interest. Prior to the war the centre of unity for the clergy and laity of the Church of England in America had been the recognition of the Bishop of London, as the Diocesan of the one, and the use by minister and people alike of the same formularies of devotion and the acknowledgment of the same symbols of belief. The Prayer-book remained, indeed, when the war broke out, but its use was practically interdicted. The presence of the state prayers rendered it unacceptable to those who sympathized with the revolt, while the "loyalists," rather than omit these supplications from the accustomed forms, preferred the closing of their Churches and the cessation of all public prayers. But the allegiance due to the See of London was wholly destroyed. The clergy could no longer depend upon the license of a foreign Bishop for induction to American parishes. The laity no longer regarded a foreign prelate as empowered to administer discipline and exercise oversight

in the case of their wayward priests, or give the valid commission to their aspirants for orders. The Church had felt in every quarter the effects of the war. In the interruption of services, the removal of the clergy, the suspension of the grants from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Crown, and the odium attaching in the revolted States to everything derived from and dependent upon the hated mother-land, the Church sunk to the lowest depths of depression, and in certain quarters seemed well-nigh extinct. The leading clergymen at the North had warmly espoused the cause of the King, and although in the Middle States and at the South the clergy were in general in sympathy with the popular side, still in the minds of the multitude, both in the North and South, the Church was regarded as closely connected with the tyranny from which, at a great cost of blood and treasure, the land had been freed. Even the Church buildings were in many cases despoiled and destroyed, and the end of the struggle found the Church existing only in a few of the centres of population, or else where the piety and popularity of patriot clergymen had enabled its adherents to weather the storm of prejudice and ignorant hate. There had been attempts to secure the Episcopate, and earnest prayers for this coveted completion of the order and government of the Church in the colonies, dating back for upward of a century. But still the close of the war found no Bishop in America, and but few clergymen scattered throughout the independent States. Even where the Church had been established, it had suffered depletion in numbers, and the spoiling of its goods and glebes. In Virginia, where prior to the Revolutionary struggle there were upward of one hundred and sixty Churches and Chapels, with nearly a hundred clergymen ministering at their altars; the close of the contest found ninety-five parishes extinct, and of the remainder nearly one-half were without ministrations. Less than thirty clergymen remained at their posts when the war had ceased. Many of the Churches had been closed or converted to other uses, or else destroyed. The sacramental vessels even had been, in many cases, taken by sacrilegious hands and devoted to unholy purposes. Here, as elsewhere, the Church was well-nigh extinct.

But the gates of hell had not wholly prevailed against the Church of Christ. There were those, both of the clergy and laity, who were alive to the necessity of organization and the creation of a fresh bond of unity. In 1783, ten clergymen met at Woodbury, Conn., and on the Feast of the Annunciation chose, rather than elected, the excellent Samuel Seabury, D.D., *Oxon.*, to go first to England, and then, if need be, to Scotland, to secure the coveted Episcopate, without which the New England Churchmen felt that all efforts for the organization of the Church would be futile. In Maryland, under the leadership of the able and celebrated William Smith, D.D., *Oxon.*, the first president of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, and one of the ablest of the American clergy, measures looking toward organization were taken by the clergy, first at a gathering of a number of their order at the commencement of Washington College, of which Dr. Smith was president, and later in the autumn, at a formal meeting, at which a "Declaration of Rights" was formulated, and measures taken for the perpetuation of the Church and the preservation of its civil and ecclesiastical privileges. The following year, the centennial of which we entered upon in 1884, the Church in Pennsylvania, under the leadership of the apostolic White, completed its organization on the plan which has subsequently become universal in the American Church, by the admission of the laity to its ecclesiastical councils and by its recognition of their presence and co-ordinate power in its deliberations and legislation. In Virginia, where, at the opening of the war, the Legislature had taken

in hand the revision of the prayers, so far as directing the omission of the state supplications was concerned, the clergy met in Council and took measures, which were subsequently adopted at the southward, for the preservation of the Church temporalities and the prevention of any undue assumption of power on the part of the Bishops, whose coming they felt could now be no longer prevented. In South Carolina, when the county had been ravaged by the British troops again and again during the war, and when the popular mind was specially antagonistic to anything savoring of England, whether in State or Church, the preliminary Convention, while recognizing the existence and need of the three orders in the ministry, especially stipulated that no Bishop should be settled in the State for the present.

It was under circumstances such as those that a suggestion made by Dr. Abraham Beach, of New Brunswick, in a letter to the Rev. Dr. White, of Philadelphia, and at a later date in one addressed to the Rev. Samuel Provost, the patriot-rector of Trinity, New York, resulted in a gathering of clergy and laity at New Brunswick, on the 11th of May, 1784, with a view to consultation respecting the state and prospects of the Church. It was in connection with a meeting of the "Corporation for the Relief of Widow's and Orphans of Clergymen of the Church of England," in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, that this primary and informal Convention was held. Laymen were present as well as clergymen, and a Committee on Correspondence was appointed, "for the purpose of forming a continental representation of the Episcopal Church, and for the better management of other concerns" of the same. A committee was requested "to wait upon the clergy of Connecticut," at their Convocation in the ensuing "Trinity week," for the purpose of "soliciting their concurrence in such measures as may be deemed conducive to the union and prosperity of the Episcopal Churches in the States of America." The records of this meeting for consultation of a few friends of the Church are still extant. A single sheet of foolscap, faded and yellow with age, and bearing in lieu of other attestation the indorsement of the venerable William White, D.D., to the effect that it is "The original of the minutes of the Meeting in New Brunswick in May, 1784," and adding the interesting fact that it was "in the handwriting of the Rev. Benjamin (since Bishop) Moore, of New York," contains the scanty minutes of this gathering, out of which grew the General Convention of the American Church.

On the Tuesday after the feast of St. Michael next ensuing, October 6th, 1784, there met, agreeably to the recommendation of the New Brunswick meeting, "a Convention of Clergymen and Lay Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America," in the city of New York. Of the New England States, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and Connecticut, were represented by a single clerical delegate respectively. Six clergymen and three laymen were in attendance from New York; New Jersey sent a single clergyman, with three laymen; Pennsylvania was represented by three clergymen and four laymen; Delaware by two clergymen and a single layman; Maryland by the celebrated Dr. William Smith; while a foot-note to the "broad-side" proceedings tells us "that the Rev. Mr. Griffith, from the State of Virginia, was present by permission; the clergy of that State, being restricted by laws yet in force," not being "at liberty to send delegates, or consent to any alteration in the order, government, doctrine, or worship of the Church." Fifteen clergymen and eleven of the laity made up a body whose deliberations, so far as indicated by their results, command our profound respect, and whose far-seeing policy has commended itself, and the "fundamental principles" on which that policy was formulated, to the approval of all