

when, with minds instructed by learning, imbued with the scripture and guided by experience, our Reformers set about, with unshackled freedom the great work of ridding the English Church from the errors and superstitions which had gathered around her. But in doing this work they desired to set up no new thing, but to bring back the Church to that soundness of doctrine and polity and beauty of worship which they found scripture and antiquity had approved. Their whole mind in this respect is simply summed up at the commencement of the preface of the form for ordaining her ministers. "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles times there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church—bishops, priests and deacons." And now I pray you to look to the result of this work, begun and ended in this spirit, as it is to be seen in our Prayer-book. There are the three orders of ministers, as has just been said, and these in unbroken line from the Apostles, who have not taken the ministry upon themselves, but have been called of God, as was Aaron. And a service of ordination provided, which has impressed on it the very spirit of Christ. There are the three creeds that have been the depositories of faith from the earliest times: the Apostles Creed, older than the New Testament Scriptures themselves; and articles of religion, protesting not only against the errors of Rome, but the errors of schismatics, who dividing from Rome have also divided from the faith of the Catholic Church. And there is a catechism to bring men up in the faith thus recorded. There are offices for the administration of the blessed sacraments, which lift them far out of all apprehension of their being mere outward forms, and yet leave no room for believing that the gifts and graces bestowed by their divinely infused power can have any efficacy unless in souls fitted to receive them. There is an office, too, for the laying on of hands on the young, where, as in ancient days, the Spirit of God is invited to come down and strengthen their souls when they renew their baptismal vows. There are offices, too, of most solemn and stirring character for all the events of human life which most deeply concern us—for marriage, for childbirth, for sickness, and for death. Then we have our daily offices, with confessions so profound that while they express all that the penitent heart can want, yet fill it with deeper penitence still, with absolutions that animate with hope while they stir to exertion, with prayers suited for every want, thanksgivings and praises for every mercy; and all this in language not more remarkable for its fervency than for its calmness, for its depth than for its simplicity. This is the result of the work of the Fathers of the English reformation; this the faith, Liturgy, and polity which the State of England has adopted as her religion, and deeply interwoven with her constitution.—*Charge of the Archdeacon of Stafford.*