

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. G. J. LOW, M.A.

THE Article by G. V. in a recent issue, on Baptism and Sponsors, advocating a shortened form of the Baptismal Office and its adaptation to circumstances, deserves our serious attention. Its sentiments will surely find an echo in most clerical hearts. It contains "wholesome doctrine and necessary for these times:" for in these times adaptation is necessary in order to conserve. Conservative of her doctrines and formularies the Church must be; but there is a conservatism that defeats its own ends. The fruitfulness of a tree is conserved not by letting it severely alone, but occasional and judicious pruning.

If, with regard to the Prayer Book, this sentiment is felt in England, as G. V. shews, much more do we feel it in this country with its varied conditions. In fact so generally is it felt that "the rubrics are broken" constantly. It cannot be otherwise. "Innovations" are made whereby the letter of the Law may indeed be broken, while its spirit is all the more preserved. We wonder that our Fathers in God, the Bishops of this ecclesiastical Province do not issue an "Order in Council" suggesting some little changes, or allowing some which are already practiced. Let us instance a few.

1. The Baptismal Office may well be shortened, as G. V. urges, by making all the didactic and hortatory passages optional. The Office would be liturgically improved by having less *preaching* in it, and having it mainly consist of *worship* pure and simple.

2. Indeed a general Order, to cover the whole ground, might well be issued, rendering optional the recital of all such lectures wherever they occur: *e.g.*, in the Daily Offices, ("Dearly Beloved Brethren") or in the Eucharistic, or Baptismal, or any other. Our Reformers did most wisely in those days of homiletical want to intersperse them in the services: but in these days of abundant, not to say excessive, preaching, these sermonettes are very often needless breaks in the worship of the faithful.

3. In the Confirmation Office a change is sadly needed in the wording of the question which the Bishop puts to the candidates. In almost every Confirmation Class to-day there are some converts from the sects, or persons who were baptized as adults, and who in consequence had no "Godfathers and Godmothers." To all such the Bishop's question as it now stands savours of unreality: which is a pity at that solemn time. The formula in the American Prayer Book remedies this; but even it might be improved upon.

4. At the funeral of the late Bishop Fuller of Niagara, the Lord's Prayer and the closing collects were said *in the Church*, and as little as possibly was left to be said at the grave. This is a common sense reform; and with such a precedent I suppose we can all follow suit now. In need I am free to confess I have done it for years. In most of our Canadian parishes the Cemetery is miles away from the Church.

On funeral occasions the Church is often crowded, while but a handful of people, it may be, will accompany the remains the whole way to the grave. It seems wrong to dismiss the large assembly in the "House of Prayer" without a word of prayer—which one must do to be strictly "rubrical;"—while the recitation of all those prayers at the grave becomes the most formal of forms if the weather be very cold, or hot, or wet, or stormy. Why could not their Lordships officially sanction this modification.

5. I will be second to none in loyalty to our Gracious Queen. But anything may be overdone: and in this matter I submit the service "doth protest too much," as Shakespeare says. Why could not we be allowed to drop the prayer which comes before the Collect for the Day in the Eucharistic Office? We have already prayed for the Queen in the suffrage in Matins, and again in the Litany (if that has been used), and we shall pray for her again in the Prayer for the Church Militant. The recurrence of Her Majesty's name, in huge capitals, gives the Liturgy a needlessly Erastian aspect.

6. "That it may please Thee to endue the Lords of the Council and all the Nobility." (Litany) This phrase is an archaism even in England, and in this country it is a perfect fossil. What do the people pray for when they use these words—*what* "Lords" and *what* "Council?" Why could not our Fathers in God order us to substitute the words: "Endue the Governor General, the Council of this Dominion and all in Authority?"

7. On occasions where it is desirable to shorten the service, why could we not be allowed to close the Matins with the *Benedictus* using it (or the *Fubilate*) as the "Introit?" Some city churches indeed make Matins and Eucharist separate services with an interval of time before the latter. That is all well enough for them, but not practicable nor desirable for the great majority of our parishes. Such curtailment would omit what is immediately duplicated in the Ante-Communion, viz., the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Collect for the Day. To be sure we should miss the Collect which thanks God for having "safely brought us to the beginning of this day:" but, considering that by the time these words are reached it is usually high noon, I don't know that the "eternal fitness of things would suffer thereby."

All these little changes would remove incongruities in our services, and make them more elastic, more appropriate, more appreciable, by those outside our fold as well as by those within; and yet would not sacrifice a hair's breadth of principle or of doctrine. Many of them are already made by various clergymen, and a word from the bench of Bishops would warrant them. To use a seeming paradox, let their Lordships, by authorizing these "prunings" contribute to the "enrichment" of our Liturgy.

SILENCE never shows itself to so great an advantage as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation.

A QUESTION FOR OUR BISHOPS.

THE following letter has been received by us and we deem it our duty to give it all possible prominence,

To the Editor DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—The Sunday before Epiphany Sunday, a Pastoral from the Bishop was read in all the Churches calling for a collection on Epiphany Sunday for Foreign Missions. Under that pastoral all monies collected on that Sunday should, I presume, be forwarded to the Mission Board, and distributed by them. What right then has the Revd. Mr. Armitage to apply to any Rector for that collection for the benefit of the Rev. J. Cooper Robinson, Japan Fund? I see by the *Evangelical Churchman* that St. John's, Port Hope collection on that day, \$25.50, was remitted to him for the benefit of that Fund. Application was made by him to the Rector of St. James', Orillia, for the collection there on that Sunday which was promptly refused by the peoples' Churchwarden. When collections are called for for certain missions, as in this case, has the Rector or Churchwardens any right to dispose of that collection to suit themselves? If so, the people of St. James' will have to be informed in future for which mission their money is to go before they will contribute. It was a lucky thing that the peoples' Churchwarden is not a Wycliffite, otherwise our collection, some \$35, would have found its way to Japan.

When collections are called for by the Bishop for any Mission Fund, all monies so collected should be handed to the Mission Board, and not be at the call of any private persons for any particular fund. Your views on this matter will be thankfully received by your subscribers in Orillia. Yours, etc.,

ONE OF THEM.

Orillia, Jan. 26th, 1889.

Our views are simply those which any honorable person must, as such, necessarily hold.

To utilise an Episcopal Pastoral for the furtherance of any private and party scheme, not contemplated by the Bishop, when sending out such Pastoral, is nothing but an act of scandalous dishonesty such as in the secular sphere would bring the guilty person into serious disgrace, probably under a Police Court sentence. That an act of shame is made honorable when done to help a religious party, we know to be the accepted teaching of the leaders of the party in question. The consciences of Church people generally, however, are not so debauched or seduced by party passion.

But the question is put imperatively by this letter,—What do the Bishops of the Church in Canada think of a party clique setting their authority thus at defiance, ignoring the order of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and using a Bishop's Pastoral for their private advantage?

The position taken by the concoctors of this scheme shows them to be so utterly out of harmony with the Church of England, as to be woefully out of place ministering at her altars, or teaching her children, as much so as to make Messrs. Parnell, Davitt, O'Brien and other Home Rule leaders the rulers of the British Empire. Pray, to whom do our Church buildings belong? To the Church, or to any clique that temporarily controls the pulpit? Men who cannot sink their trumpery individualities in the main stream of Church order, whose

idiosyncrasy guides and not Church office for carrying they demonstrate their hearts controlled by the above of those whose policy wish to be those who a of decency, above moral of Missions obedience or tricks? The of Japan wh

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