

adhere to the Canons as they *were*, thus diverging from the Mother Church, or shall follow her in her new paths, so that we may be governed by the same laws.* The change in the 29th Canon, allowing fathers to be sponsors at baptism, merely authorises a practice which from necessity had become very common here. But it is not the less desirable still to adhere to the old rule, as far as possible, and to teach your people why sponsors are required, independent of the parents, whose responsibility cannot be increased by any vows. But the alteration, involving the republication of the Canon, extends beyond this, and revives, what may be considered to be partly obsolete, the restriction to communicants of the office of sponsors. The two Convocations had substituted for communicants, persons capable of receiving the Communion, but the Government objected to promulgate the Canon in this form, and therefore the Clergy are now strictly required, by this new Canon, to refuse to admit as a sponsor any non-communicant. In principle, we must all admit that this is right, but we have also unhappily to admit, that the consequence of a strict adherence to it would be that many children would be left unbaptized, because duly qualified sponsors are not attainable. And when we consider that the requirement of sponsors is merely an ecclesiastical rule, we can have no hesitation in deciding, that any impediments to the administration of baptism introduced by it are greatly to be deplored.

The other Canons are those relating to the terms in which the Clergy are required to subscribe to the formularies of the Church. You will remember that, in consequence of complaints of the too great stringency of the forms, a Royal Commission was issued to investigate the subject, and the recommendation of the Commissioners deserves much weight, from the character of the persons selected, who were fair representatives of the several schools, or lines of thought, at present existing. The recommendations of this Commission were embodied in an Act of Parliament,† with the consent of the two Convocations, the 36th and following Canons being altered so as to be in harmony with it, and the general result is as follows:—The three Articles in the 36th Canon are cancelled, and the following declaration is substituted, “I do solemnly make

* The Synod has since determined *not* to accept the new Canons.

† This Act does not extend to the Colonies.