

on earth, and the Revelation of St. John gives us an insight into the gorgeous ritual of the Church in Heaven. It depends, therefore, wholly on the circumstances of the case, whether a certain Ritual in the Church Militant be right or wrong; because Ritual once possessed a divine sanction—an approval which could never have been accorded to anything wrong in itself.

II. But as *Churchmen* we are Ritualists; so much so that our ordinary mode of worship differs exceedingly from that of all others, and is esteemed by those who dissent from us as Ritualistic in the extreme. Uniformity in this Ritual is one of the leading principles of the Church; and that nothing should be left to the caprice of an individual minister is the necessary consequence. The directions for the celebration of our ritual are to be found in the Rubrics, which are part of the Statute Law, being confirmed by the Act of Uniformity, and consequently, according to Lord Hardwick's celebrated decision, "bind the laity." The clergy are of course bound to the observance of the Rubrics by their subscriptions of conformity and solemn declarations, and neither clergy nor laity can plead usage as justification for non-compliance with the Rubrics, because no custom can supersede the Statute Law. In the great case of *Liddell vs. Westerton*, the Judicial Committee affirm that "in the performance of the services, rites, and ceremonies, ordered by the Prayer book, the directions contained in it must be strictly observed; that no omissions and no additions can be permitted;" while the Prayer book itself provides "that for the resolution of all doubts concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in this book, the parties who so doubt shall always resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same." Now, although this was, and continues to be, the unquestionable state of the law, yet for generations the services of the Church were performed with little or no regard to rubrical accuracy. The carelessness of the clergy prompted, and the laxity of Bishops winked at, the most flagrant deviations from Church order, while the laity apathetically acquiesced in glaring violations of that uniformity in worship which is a leading feature of our Church. The disuse of the Offertory and daily prayer, the dismissal of the congregation immediately after the sermon was ended, the baptism of infants at any time but the prescribed time, the neglect of the Church's fasts and festivals, the curtailment of the services, may serve as glaring instances of errors of defect in ritual; while the singing of hymns at the commencement of divine service, the use of extemporaneous prayer, and dignifying one part of the service, namely, the sermon, with the extra Ritual of processions and change of vestments, are illustrations of errors of addition in unauthorized ceremonial, which widely prevailed twenty years ago, and are even yet not uncommon. Now, in the great religious awakening of our day, it was to be expected that there should be a return to first principles, and particularly to that great principle of uniformity to which the clergy are so solemnly pledged. This was not, however, attempted without much excitement and acrimonious controversy; *renovation* in the performance of divine services was too often mistaken for *innovation*, and the controversy regarding the Rubric on the "ornaments of the Church and the ministers thereof" does not now create more strife than did the subject then of Credence Tables, and Surplices and Offertory, points which have at length been definitely settled by the highest Court of