

the rising of the ocean tides. Could an exact image of the average services of the Church as they were celebrated sixty years ago be made palpable to our view, there is not one Churchman or Churchwoman in an hundred in this Diocese who would desire to recall them.

We revere the Bishops and Clergy of those days. They did all that the circumstances of the Church and country permitted or required. But the Church of England in that and the preceding age was not seeing her best days; and when we consider under what disabilities our Church in this country labored previous to and during the Revolution, and indeed for many years after it, and that she took her first impress from the Mother Church, when that Church was by no means the glowing, working Church that she has been since, we can easily see that to take our Church as she was in her first feeble and crude days in this country, and make it an absolute pattern, even in subordinate things, for all future ages, would have been of all things shortsighted and fatal.

We can easily see, too, if our General Convention in those early days had undertaken to engage in minute restrictive legislation in regard to Ritual, absolutely tying down all our services to precisely the form and manner which alone entered into their conceptions; I say, if they had attempted to do that, we can easily see what a piece of work they would have made of it! Let, then, the wisdom of the past, whether deliberate or accidental, be a lesson for the future! At the present day it seems to me that the General Convention could scarcely engage in a more perilous and mischievous undertaking than would be that of seeking by legislation to abridge the just liberty of the Clergy. It is not required for the legitimate government of the Church, and it cannot be carried to any such extent as would give anything like respectability to the attempt without the gravest inconveniences and dangers.

RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION NOT NEEDED.

I say restrictive legislation in regard to Ritual is not required in the Church in this country, and for two reasons:—

First—Excessive ritualism (so called) as it is seen in some places in England has not transferred itself to this country to any extent worthy of notice. It has never from the first had vitality enough on this side of the ocean to propagate itself. It is ten years or more since the first alarm was raised, since certain features appeared for the first time in one or two small churches in this Diocese. These ten years have passed away, and still everything that can possibly be charged as real excess is confined to two or three small churches. For to speak of such services as those of Trinity Church as worthy of grave censure,—to treat choral services, and surpliced choirs, and processional psalms and hymns as things perilous to the Church—is a puerility hardly entitled to serious consideration. We can hardly presume to cut ourselves off from all reference to the authority and example of the Mother Church from which we are descended; and in the Church of England most people know that choral services and surpliced choirs and processions have been familiar things ever since the Reformation. Particular individuals, being unused to these things, may not find them helps to devotion, and may prefer to attend a worship which is differently ordered. This they are perfectly at liberty to do; but for them to attempt to deprive others of the services which they do not choose for