

for the love of those who helped them. Let us remember that the most virulent and blood-thirsty foes for fifteen years had swarmed through England looking for honest-hearted Churchmen who would dare be found reading their Prayer Book. Let us remember all this, and we may not greatly wonder if some advantage was taken at the time of reaction and returning power.

The conference between Episcopalians and Presbyterians about proposed alterations in the Prayer Book was held in Bishop Sheldon's house at Savoy, but it was scarcely a conference. The Presbyterians complained of this. Churchmen simply made what few alterations they chose, none of them in the least degree conciliatory, and then, with some show of haughtiness, merely announced them. But it did not appear to Sheldon that any large amount of regard was due in any sense to those who had never been able to find invective too harsh to hurl against the Book of Common Prayer.

Indeed, the long reign of non-liturgical "pratings" throughout England was to come unmistakably to an end, and for this purpose there was passed through Parliament, in 1662, a long and explicit act, known as the "Uniformity Act," which made the use of the Book of Common Prayer, as revised at the Savoy conference, just as imperative as its non-use had been in the days of Cromwell. This Act carried with it heavy penalties upon all who should fail to comply with its enactments. No doubt this caused great dismay to many parsons then holding livings in the Church, for divers of them were practically Presbyterians, and were in the habit of pouring forth their own long effusions in prayer—"conceived prayer," as it was called.

Charles II., as everyone knows, was a lover of pleasure, even to a scandalous extent. His life was no credit to any cause that he might espouse. This was an unfortunate burden that the Church of the Restoration period had to bear. The Prayer Book perished in England with the gory death of Charles I., it rose to new life amid the shameful and licentious doings of Charles II. The public, therefore, naturally connected the liturgy with the affairs of royalty rather than those of religion. Sheldon was so constituted that this did not worry him greatly. He felt that England could not be England without the national Church just as it had been before the Puritans strove to rend it and stamp it out. Hence he supported the stringent "Uniformity Act" with all his might, and even appeared to enjoy the discomfiture which it caused.

The venerable Juxon died in 1663, and Gilbert Sheldon succeeded to the primacy. Many hard things have been said against him, but they can nearly all be traced to Burnet, the

historian, who, it is said, owed the Archbishop a grudge for not granting him preferment that he expected, or else to Neale, the Puritan writer, whose prejudice against a dignitary of the Church might easily lead to exaggeration.

Sheldon, at all events, was a princely giver. It was a day of restoration, both as to principles and buildings. To the former Sheldon gave his energies, to the latter his money. He spent a handsome fortune upon the works of restoration which went on everywhere throughout England from the time that the oppressions of the Commonwealth let him go free. He was a man, too, of undaunted courage. He feared not the king himself when duty demanded that he should speak. By reproofing his Majesty for some of his shameful irregularities he incurred royal displeasure, which was not removed during Sheldon's lifetime. The Archbishop showed courage, too, in another way. During the awful plague which visited London in 1665, his Grace remained at his post at Lambeth, though all that could leave London did so.

His great crime was that he gave no quarter to dissenters. The legislation of the period shows that. Following the Uniformity Act came, in 1665, the "Five-Mile Act," forbidding people to meet together within five miles of any parish for religious purposes other than Church services, and the "Second Conventicle Act," in 1670, bearing upon "the growing and dangerous practices of seditious sectaries and other disloyal persons, who, under pretence of tender consciences, contrive at their meetings insurrections." It is very evident that the Church and State were resolved to prevent, if possible, a recurrence of the dread power that had trampled the dearest interests of both under their feet.

In 1673 the "Test Act" was passed. No doubt the hand of Sheldon was in this, and the wisdom of it may well be doubted. It provided that all office-bearers under the king or the Duke of York, residing within London or Westminster, or within thirty miles thereof, should "receive the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England." The effect in many cases was a profanation of the Holy Communion not pleasant to think of.

Yet here again the state of things in the realm has to be considered. The mention of the Duke of York (the future James II.) in the Test Act shows a reason for the Act entirely different from its bearing upon dissenters. The Duke, though heir to the throne, had married a Romanist, and began himself to show alarming tendencies towards Romanism. Here, then, was a fresh enemy threatening the Church. How was she to be guarded? Sheldon knew of no other way than by the strong arm of the law. All officers of state must in future be, at least,