

## The Church Guardian,

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### THE CHURCH—HER POSITION.

#### III.

HAVING fulfilled the first part of Her Lord's command, by admitting the catechumen into the Kingdom, the Church proceeds to carry out the second. She teaches him.

She has received him, ignorant and confused though he might be. She has not defrauded him of his right of entrance. To enable him to enter, and thus claim the blessing, she has borne with his weakness, with his want of thorough appreciation of all she has in store for him. She has demanded of him nothing more than he was able to give; humble faith, hearty repentance, and a steadfast desire of obedience. But though at present he knows but little, she intends to inform heart, mind, and spirit forthwith.

The Church, in order to teach her children, has something to teach. She cannot teach successfully, unless she knows for certain herself. She must have a body of Truth, about which she has no doubt; which she holds as essential; which she claims is essential for her members; which she utters with no wavering voice, and which will stand the test of origin and experience.

She imparts now to the inquiring learner the everlasting verities which she has received. Step by step, as he can bear them, they are unfolded to his gaze. She did not make them. She cannot alter them. They must be accepted, as they are taught, either wholly, or not at all. Not a single word, or expression of Divine Truth can she consent for a moment, for any reason, to compromise or explain away. Other systems may be invented on all sides of her, which may possess the charm of change, or the recommendation of adaptability. Other doctrines may be made the test of membership, or the requisites for salvation. She calmly says "this is the way, walk in it."

But then she makes a grand distinction between "the Faith" and mere opinions. The Faith is changeless. Necessarily so, if it come from a changeless God. A Faith coming from God, must, on the one hand, be perfect, and on the other hand be capable of covering the whole ground, and of satisfying every conceivable variation of the human mind, and of earthborn circumstance. Whereas, opinions are the product of humanity, and

cannot be permanent. They change with the mind that fathers them. There is no room in a busy world like this for a Church that is not certain of her principles; and she can only be certain of them in so far as she holds and transmits them from an authority which she acknowledges to be superior to herself. As for opinions, she neither enforces nor precludes them. They are matter of private judgment. On many points of transcendent import, she does teach, and teach dogmatically. Thus far she may be said to have opinions, and to make them, as far as they are voluntarily accepted, binding on her members. But she carefully guards against their being supposed to be necessary to salvation.

Thus the Faith is simple, and one, and objective. Opinions may be subtle, and varied, and self-evolved. It may even be said that the dogmatic expression of any but the very simplest Christian Truth is unessential. It is true that the most advanced dogmas of modern times are implicitly contained in the earlier language of the Church. But it is also clear that the soul in its first need of spiritual food must have such food only as it can assimilate. And so again the Church gives it objective Truth in its simplest expression, and reserves the more explicit definitions for greater intellectual strength and stronger spiritual standing, while she leaves opinions to form themselves.

And herein consists the great difference between the Church of God and the sects. The Faith of the Church is a broad, clear and simple Faith, the announcement of changeless Truths, of accomplished realities. To this she adds nothing. From this she takes nothing. She leaves out in the cold no one who will accept these truths, professing them in the words of her Baptismal Creed. She demands no adherence to whims or notions which she has invented herself, and which are made the test of membership. This, all the sects, without exception, do. One denies this Article of Faith, another denies another, and while holding much truth, insists on excluding every one who will not subscribe to the denial. He may accept the Truth; that is not enough. He must deny part of the Catholic Faith before he can be admitted to the Sect.

The Church baptizes the candidate, and then teaches him the "way of God." But she teaches what she has received; what she can never deny; what cannot with safety be let go; and what she will therefore teach to the end, because the Lord intrusted it to her for the world's Salvation.

### THE ORNAMENTS RUBRIC.

This famous Rubric has lately entered upon a new phase of its history. After prolonged, and learned discussion, the two Houses of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury have agreed to recommend for adoption as law the following amended form:—"And here it is to be noted, that such ornaments of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England by the Authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, until further order be taken by lawful authority. In saying public prayers, or ministering the Sacraments, or other rites of the Church,

every priest and deacon shall wear a surplice with a stole or scarf, and the hood of his degree; and in preaching he shall wear a surplice with a stole or scarf, and the hood of his degree, or if he think fit, a gown with hood and scarf; and no other ornament shall at any time be used by him contrary to the monition of the Bishop of the diocese; provided always that this rubric shall not be understood to repeal the 24th and 25th, and 58th Canon of 1604."

The amendment to the present Rubric, which is printed above in italics, will be seen to consist in certain additions, and which, with all due deference to the august body that has put it forth, we venture to predict, is very far from giving a peaceful solution in respect to the ornaments of the minister. We cannot see that it does anything to remove any of the ambiguities of the existing Rubric. It seems to define in positive terms what the minister shall wear in saying the public prayers, or ministering the Sacraments or other rites of the Church, but it does not prescribe what he shall not wear. And so long as the Rubric in dispute remains as it is, the source of strife remains also. It was not, indeed, to be expected that the Houses of the Southern Convocation were going to give an authoritative interpretation of the Ornament Rubric, but we cannot see why, as they ventured to deal with it, they had not the courage to deal with it more thoroughly. What is wanted, is a Rubric prescribing what shall be the dress of the ministers in all times of his ministration, and, surely, it is not impossible to draw up such a document. As it was not to be drawn up for the first time, account would have to be taken of what Rubrics already existed, as well as of existing parties, and this might without difficulty be done. Indeed, that part of the amended form, beginning with—"In saying the public prayers, &c." would be almost sufficient. It provides that a certain dress shall be worn, but does not limit the dress to what is there specified, leaving thereby room, should the Bishop of the Diocese not interfere, for wearing a more elaborate dress. All parties might well be satisfied with some such Rubric. It prescribes a minimum, but forbears to forbid more. Signs are not wanting already, as may be seen by letters, by speeches and articles, that the "Gloria in excelsis" was sung too soon by the Upper House, as they concluded then their labours concerning the Ornaments Rubric. Where that Rubric formed part of the deliberations of the Ritual Commission, they concluded to leave it alone, and we must say that we wish the Southern Convocation had followed their example, except they had done their work more thoroughly. At this distance, and according to our Ecclesiastical Constitution, the question at issue only affects us indirectly, but we cannot refrain from saying how earnestly we hope that the amended form will never be the Ornaments Rubric of the Church in England. We cannot consider it a compromise, though we supposed it is meant to be one. We only hope, as we fully expect, that the Northern Convocation will reject it, and then all danger will be passed of its becoming the law of the Church.

[Since writing the above, we rejoice to learn that, by "non-concurrence of Orders," the Rubric has been lost in the North; and so things remain as they were.]

### THE METROPOLITAN QUESTION.

"THE Metropolitan question is not at all likely to end where it is now.

"In this Diocese there is a large party greatly dissatisfied with the existing state of things. That it will eventually be carried to the law court, is almost beyond a doubt, though what the first step will be I am not in a position to say. Most probably an injunction will be asked for restraining the Bishop of Fredericton from presiding as Metropolitan at the next Provincial Synod, and from discharging any of the duties pertaining to this office. The Bishop of Montreal takes no part in the controversy either way."

So says the Montreal correspondent of the *Dominion Churchman*. We sincerely regret that such is the case. Surely, if these gentlemen will not abide by the decision of the highest Ecclesiastical Body in the Ecclesiastical Province, their feelings as Christians, and regard for the honour of the Church, ought to lead them to seek some other way of settling a disputed question of order, than by the scandal of a suit-at-law. Is there no way of coming to a decision but by an appeal to the Civil Courts? If it be a disputed question of interpretation, let it be submitted to eminent legal men, one of whom shall be chosen from each Diocese in the Province, and let their decision be submitted to the Provincial Synod. The claim is that the Canon of the Provincial Synod is *ultra vires*. Let the most eminent Canon Law Jurists say whether it is so or not. For our part we should be perfectly willing to accept their interpretation as final. While regarding the Mother Church with feelings of deep loyalty and gratitude, we rejoice that the Church in Canada is free from all foreign interference. We are left to solve our religious problems as best we can, and to adapt the Church to the needs of this great and growing country. There is one point we would like to submit to our Montreal friends. If the Crown found as it did, that it had no power to issue letters patent, or appoint Bishops in the Colonies, then what becomes of the clause giving Metropolitan rights to the successors of Bishop Fulford? Is it not clearly worthless?

### FREE SEATS.

BY THE LATE BISHOP STANLEY.

PALACE NORWICH, Dec. 16, 1842.

DEAR SIRS,—Agreeing with you, as entirely do, upon the injustice and error of Pews, by which the benefits of our Church Services are, comparatively speaking, confined to the higher and wealthier classes, to the exclusion of the poor, I sincerely hope your appeal to the inhabitants of Ipswich may be successful, and that they may be amongst the first to express, as a collective body, their disapprobation of a system so adverse, in my opinion, to the true interests of our national Church, which professes to have so much at heart, the spiritual welfare of the poorer and humbler classes of our population. I am persuaded, indeed, that one of the prominent causes of dissent, as well as utter disregard and indifference to religion, manifested by too many of those classes, is attributable, in a great degree, to that exclusive system of pews, which has for so many years prevailed. If you have not yet seen the charge, delivered, Nov., 1842, by Archdeacon S. Wilberforce, (afterwards Bishop of Oxford and of Winchester), I would recommend it to your notice, as contain-